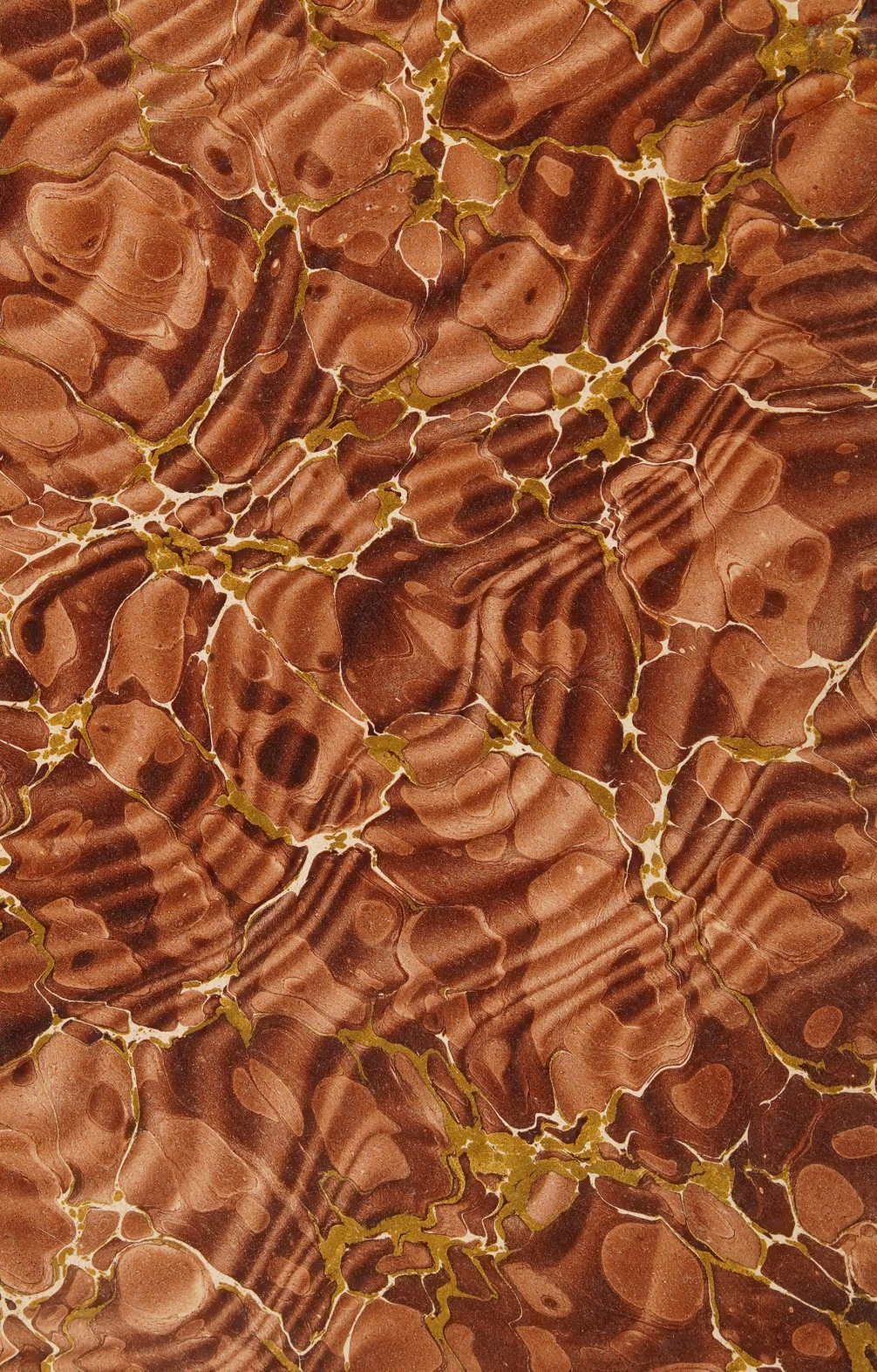

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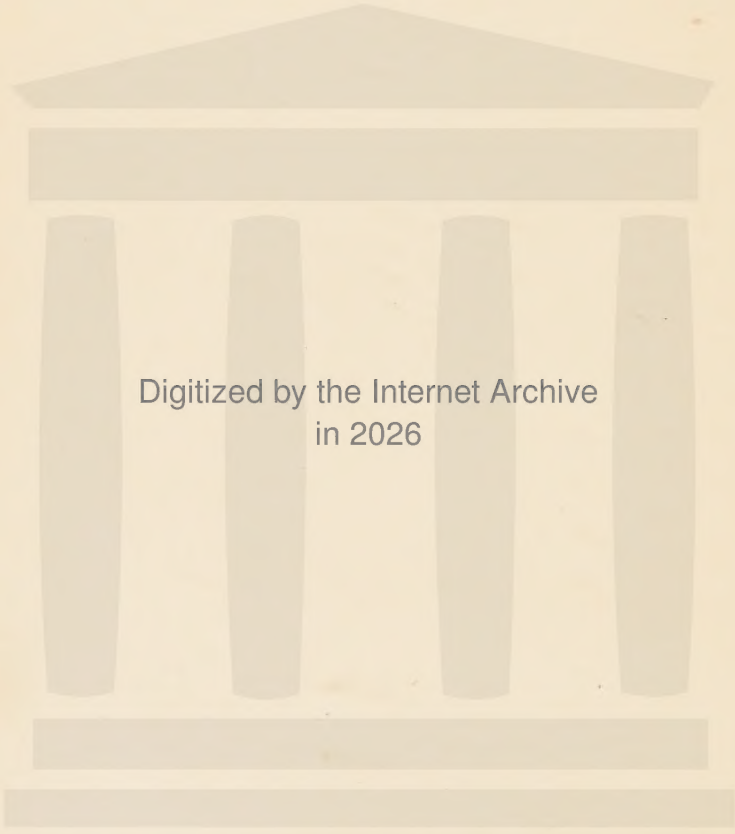
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# THE LIFE

OF

# WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE

The MC Co.

*Sir John Radstone*

*from a painting by William Bradley.*

# THE LIFE OF WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE

BY

JOHN MORLEY

*IN THREE VOLUMES — VOL. I*

*(1809-1859)*

New York
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
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TO THE

ELECTORS OF THE MONTROSE BURGHS

I BEG LEAVE TO

INSCRIBE THIS BOOK

IN GRATEFUL RECOGNITION

OF

THE CONFIDENCE AND FRIENDSHIP

WITH WHICH

THEY HAVE HONOURED ME

# NOTE

The material on which this biography is founded consists mainly, of course, of the papers collected at Hawarden. Besides that vast accumulation, I have been favoured with several thousands of other pieces from the legion of Mr. Gladstone's correspondents. Between two and three hundred thousand written papers of one sort or another must have passed under my view. To some important journals and papers from other sources I have enjoyed free access, and my warm thanks are due to those who have generously lent me this valuable aid. I am especially indebted to the King for the liberality with which his Majesty has been graciously pleased to sanction the use of certain documents, in cases where the permission of the Sovereign was required.

When I submitted an application for the same purpose to Queen Victoria, in readily promising her favourable consideration, the Queen added a message strongly impressing on me that the work I was about to undertake should not be handled in the narrow way of party. This injunction repre-

sents my own clear view of the spirit in which the history of a career so memorable as Mr. Gladstone's should be composed. That, to be sure, is not at all inconsistent with our regarding party feeling in its honourable sense, as entirely the reverse of an infirmity.

The diaries from which I have often quoted consist of forty little books in double columns, intended to do little more than record persons seen, or books read, or letters written as the days passed by. From these diaries come several of the mottoes prefixed to our chapters; such mottoes are marked by an asterisk.

The trustees and other members of Mr. Gladstone's family have extended to me a uniform kindness and consideration and an absolutely unstinted confidence, for which I can never cease to owe them my heartiest acknowledgment. They left with the writer an unqualified and undivided responsibility for these pages, and for the use of the material that they entrusted to him. Whatever may prove to be amiss, whether in leaving out or putting in or putting wrong, the blame is wholly mine.

J. M.

1903.

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# Book I

*1809–1831*

## INTRODUCTORY

I AM well aware that to try to write Mr. Gladstone's life at all — the life of a man who held an imposing place in many high national transactions, whose character and career may be regarded in such various lights, whose interests were so manifold, and whose years bridged so long a span of time — is a stroke of temerity. To try to write his life to-day, is to push temerity still further. The ashes of controversy, in which he was much concerned, are still hot; perspective, scale, relation, must all while we stand so near be difficult to adjust. Not all particulars, more especially of the latest marches in his wide campaign, can be disclosed without risk of unjust pain to persons now alive. Yet to defer the task for thirty or forty years has plain drawbacks too. Interest grows less vivid; truth becomes harder to find out; memories pale and colour fades. And if in one sense a statesman's contemporaries, even after death has abated the storm and temper of faction, can scarcely judge him, yet in another sense they who breathe the same air as he breathed, who know at close quarters the problems that faced him, the materials with which he had to work, the limitations of his time — such must be the best, if not the only true memorialists and recorders.

Every reader will perceive that perhaps the sharpest of all the many difficulties of my task has been to draw the line between history and biography — between the fortunes of the community and the exploits, thoughts, and purposes of the individual who had so marked a share in them. In the case of men of letters, in whose lives our literature is admirably rich, this difficulty happily for their authors and for our delight does not arise. But where the subject is a man who

BOOK I.

was four times at the head of the government — no phantom, but dictator — and who held this office of first minister for a longer time than any other statesman in the reign of the Queen, how can we tell the story of his works and days without reference, and ample reference, to the course of events over whose unrolling he presided, and out of which he made history? It is true that what interests the world in Mr. Gladstone is even more what he was, than what he did; his brilliancy, charm, and power; the endless surprises; his dualism or more than dualism; his vicissitudes of opinion; his subtleties of mental progress; his strange union of qualities never elsewhere found together; his striking unlikeness to other men in whom great and free nations have for long periods placed their trust. I am not sure that the incessant search for clues through this labyrinth would not end in analysis and disquisition, that might be no great improvement even upon political history. Mr. Gladstone said of reconstruction of the income-tax that he only did not call the task herculean, because Hercules could not have done it. Assuredly, I am not presumptuous enough to suppose that this difficulty of fixing the precise scale between history and biography has been successfully overcome by me. It may be that Hercules himself would have succeeded little better.

Some may think in this connection that I have made the preponderance of politics excessive in the story of a genius of signal versatility, to whom politics were only one interest among many. No doubt speeches, debates, bills, divisions, motions, and manœuvres of party, like the manna that fed the children of Israel in the wilderness, lose their savour and power of nutriment on the second day. Yet after all it was to his thoughts, his purposes, his ideals, his performances as statesman, in all the widest significance of that lofty and honourable designation, that Mr. Gladstone owes the lasting substance of his fame. His life was ever '*greatly absorbed*,' he said, '*in working the institutions of his country*.' Here we mark a signal trait. Not for two centuries, since the historic strife of anglican and puritan, had our island produced a ruler in whom the religious motive was paramount in the like degree. He was not only a political force but a

moral force. He strove to use all the powers of his own genius and the powers of the state for moral purposes and religious. Nevertheless his mission in all its forms was action. He had none of that detachment, often found among superior minds, which we honour for its disinterestedness, even while we lament its impotence in result. The track in which he moved, the instruments that he employed, were the track and the instruments, the sword and the trowel, of political action; and what is called the Gladstonian era was distinctively a political era. INTRO-DUC-TORY.

On this I will permit myself a few words more. The detailed history of Mr. Gladstone as theologian and churchman will not be found in these pages, and nobody is more sensible than their writer of the gap. Mr. Gladstone cared as much for the church as he cared for the state; he thought of the church as the soul of the state; he believed the attainment by the magistrate of the ends of government to depend upon religion; and he was sure that the strength of a state corresponds to the religious strength and soundness of the community of which the state is the civil organ. I should have been wholly wanting in biographical fidelity, not to make this clear and superabundantly clear. Still a writer inside Mr. Gladstone's church and in full and active sympathy with him on this side of mundane and supramundane things, would undoubtedly have treated the subject differently from any writer outside. No amount of candour or good faith — and in these essentials I believe that I have not fallen short — can be a substitute for the confidence and ardour of an adherent, in the heart of those to whom the church stands first. Here is one of the difficulties of this complex case. Yet here, too, there may be some trace of compensation. If the reader has been drawn into the whirlpools of the political Charybdis, he might not even in far worthier hands than mine have escaped the rocky headlands of the ecclesiastic Scylla. For churches also have their parties.

Lord Salisbury, the distinguished man who followed Mr. Gladstone in a longer tenure of power than his, called him 'a great Christian'; and nothing could be more true or better worth saying. He not only accepted the doctrines of that faith as he believed them to be held by his own communion;

BOOK I.

he sedulously strove to apply the noblest moralities of it to the affairs both of his own nation and of the commonwealth of nations. It was a supreme experiment. People will perhaps some day wonder that many of those who derided the experiment and reproached its author, failed to see that they were making manifest in this a wholesale scepticism as to truths that they professed to prize, far deeper and more destructive than the doubts and disbeliefs of the gentiles in the outer courts.

The epoch, as the reader knows, was what Mr. Gladstone called 'an agitated and expectant age.' Some stages of his career mark stages of the first importance in the history of English party, on which so much in the working of our constitution hangs. His name is associated with a record of arduous and fruitful legislative work and administrative improvement, equalled by none of the great men who have grasped the helm of the British state. The intensity of his mind, and the length of years through which he held presiding office, enabled him to impress for good in all the departments of government his own severe standard of public duty and personal exactitude. He was the chief force, propelling, restraining, guiding his country at many decisive moments. Then how many surprises and what seeming paradox. Devotedly attached to the church, he was the agent in the overthrow of establishment in one of the three kingdoms, and in an attempt to overthrow it in the Principality. Entering public life with vehement aversion to the recent dislodgment of the landed aristocracy as the mainspring of parliamentary power, he lent himself to two further enormously extensive changes in the constitutional centre of gravity. With a lifelong belief in parliamentary deliberation as the grand security for judicious laws and national control over executive act, he yet at a certain stage betook himself with magical result to direct and individual appeal to the great masses of his countrymen, and the world beheld the astonishing spectacle of a politician with the microscopic subtlety of a thirteenth century schoolman wielding at will the new democracy in what has been called 'the country of plain men.' A firm and trained economist, and no friend to socialism, yet by his legislation upon land in 1870 and

1881 he wrote the opening chapter in a volume on which many an unexpected page in the history of Property is destined to be inscribed. Statesmen do far less than they suppose, far less than is implied in their resounding fame, to augment the material prosperity of nations, but in this province Mr. Gladstone's name stands at the topmost height. Yet no ruler that ever lived felt more deeply the truth — for which I know no better words than Channing's — that to improve man's outward condition is not to improve man himself; this must come from each man's endeavour within his own breast; without that there can be little ground for social hope. Well was it said to him, 'You have so lived and wrought that you have kept the soul alive in England.' Not in England only was this felt. He was sometimes charged with lowering the sentiment, the lofty and fortifying sentiment, of national pride. At least it is a ground for national pride that he, the son of English training, practised through long years in the habit and tradition of English public life, standing for long years foremost in accepted authority and renown before the eye of England, so conquered imagination and attachment in other lands, that when the end came it was thought no extravagance for one not an Englishman to say, 'On the day that Mr. Gladstone died, the world has lost its greatest citizen.' The reader who revolves all this will know why I began by speaking of temerity. INTRO-DUC-TORY.

That my book should be a biography without trace of bias, no reader will expect. There is at least no bias against the truth; but indifferent neutrality in a work produced, as this is, in the spirit of loyal and affectionate remembrance, would be distasteful, discordant, and impossible. I should be heartily sorry if there were no signs of partiality and no evidence of prepossession. On the other hand there is, I trust, no importunate advocacy or tedious assentation. He was great man enough to stand in need of neither. Still less has it been needed, in order to exalt him, to disparage others with whom he came into strong collision. His own funeral orations from time to time on some who were in one degree or another his antagonists, prove that this petty and ungenerous method would have been to him of all men most repugnant. Then to pretend that for sixty years, with

BOOK I.

all 'the varying weather of the mind,' he traversed in every zone the restless ocean of a great nation's shifting and complex politics, without many a faulty tack and many a wrong reckoning, would indeed be idle. No such claim is set up by rational men for Pym, Cromwell, Walpole, Washington, or either Pitt. It is not set up for any of the three contemporaries of Mr. Gladstone whose names live with the three most momentous transactions of his age — Cavour, Lincoln, Bismarck. To suppose, again, that in every one of the many subjects touched by him, besides exhibiting the range of his powers and the diversity of his interests, he made abiding contributions to thought and knowledge, is to ignore the jealous conditions under which such contributions come. To say so much as this is to make but a small deduction from the total of a grand account.

I have not reproduced the full text of Letters in the proportion customary in English biography. The existing mass of his letters is enormous. But then an enormous proportion of them touch on affairs of public business, on which they shed little new light. Even when he writes in his kindest and most cordial vein to friends to whom he is most warmly attached, it is usually a letter of business. He deals freely and genially with the points in hand, and then without play of gossip, salutation, or compliment, he passes on his way. He has in his letters little of that spirit in which his talk often abounded, of disengagement, pleasant colloquy, happy raillery, and all the other undefined things that make the correspondence of so many men whose business was literature, such delightful reading for the idler hour of an industrious day. It is perhaps worth adding that the asterisks denoting an omitted passage hide no piquant hit, no personality, no indiscretion; the omission is in every case due to consideration of space. Without these asterisks and other omissions, nothing would have been easier than to expand these three volumes into a hundred. I think nothing relevant is lost. Nobody ever had fewer secrets, nobody ever lived and wrought in fuller sunlight.

# CHAPTER I

## CHILDHOOD

*(1809–1821)*

I know not why commerce in England should not have its old families, rejoicing to be connected with commerce from generation to generation. It has been so in other countries; I trust it will be so in this country. — Gladstone.

CHAP. I. Æt. 1–12.

The dawn of the life of the great and famous man who is our subject in these memoirs has been depicted with homely simplicity by his own hand. With this fragment of a record it is perhaps best for me to begin our journey. 'I was born,' he says, 'on December 29, 1809,' at 62 Rodney Street, Liverpool. 'I was baptized, I believe, in the parish church of St. Peter. My godmother was my elder sister Anne, then just seven years old, who died a perfect saint in the beginning of the year 1829. In her later years she lived in close relations with me, and I must have been much worse but for her. Of my godfathers, one was a Scotch episcopalian, Mr. Fraser of ——, whom I hardly ever saw or heard of; the other a presbyterian, Mr. G. Grant, a junior partner of my father's.' The child was named William Ewart, after his father's friend, an immigrant Scot and a merchant like himself, and father of a younger William Ewart, who became member for Liverpool, and did good public service in parliament.

Before proceeding to the period of my childhood, properly so-called, I will here insert a few words about my family. My maternal grandfather was known as Provost Robertson of Dingwall, a man held, I believe, in the highest respect. His wife was a Mackenzie of [Coul]. His circumstances must have been good.

BOOK I. 1809–21.

Of his three sons, one went into the army, and I recollect him as Captain Robertson (I have a seal which he gave me, a three-sided cairngorm. Cost him 7½ guineas). The other two took mercantile positions. When my parents made a Scotch tour in 1820–21 with, I think, their four sons, the freedom of Dingwall was presented to us all,[1] with my father; and there was large visiting at the houses of the Ross-shire gentry. I think the line of my grandmother was stoutly episcopalian and Jacobite: but, coming outside the western highlands, the first at least was soon rubbed down. The provost, I think, came from a younger branch of the Robertsons of Struan.

On my father's side the matter is more complex. The history of the family has been traced at the desire of my eldest brother and my own, by Sir William Fraser, the highest living authority.[2] He has carried us up to a rather remote period, I think before Elizabeth, but has not yet been able to connect us with the earliest known holders of the name, which with the aid of charter-chests he hopes to do. Some things are plain and not without interest. They were a race of borderers. There is still an old Gledstanes or Gladstone castle. They formed a family in Sweden in the seventeenth century. The explanation of this may have been that, when the union of the crowns led to the extinction of border fighting they took service like Sir Dugald Dalgetty under Gustavus Adolphus, and in this case passed from service to settlement. I have never heard of them in Scotland until after the Restoration, otherwise than as persons of family. At that period there are traces of their having been fined by public authority, but not for any ordinary criminal offence. From this time forward I find no trace of their gentility. During the eighteenth century they are, I think, principally traced by a line of maltsters (no doubt a small business then) in Lanarkshire. Their names are recorded on tombstones in the churchyard of Biggar. I remember going as a child or boy to see the representative of that branch, either in 1820 or some years earlier, who was a small watchmaker in that town. He was of the same generation as my father, but came, I understood, from a senior brother of the

[1] The freedom was formally bestowed on him in 1853.

[2] Sir William Fraser died in 1898.

CHAP. I.

Æt. 1–12.

family. I do not know whether his line is extinct. There also seem to be some stray Gladstones who are found at Yarmouth and in Yorkshire.[1]

My father's father seems from his letters to have been an excellent man and a wise parent: his wife a woman of energy. There are pictures of them at Fasque, by Raeburn. He was a merchant, in Scotch phrase; that is to say, a shopkeeper dealing in corn and stores, and my father as a lad served in his shop. But he also sent a ship or ships to the Baltic; and I believe that my father, whose energy soon began to outtop that of all the very large family, went in one of these ships at a very early age as a supercargo, an appointment then, I think, common. But he soon quitted a nest too small to hold him. He was born in December 1764: and I have (at Hawarden) a reprint of the *Liverpool Directory* for 178–, in which his name appears as a partner in the firm of Messrs. Corrie, corn merchants.

Here his force soon began to be felt as a prominent and then a foremost member of the community. A liberal in the early period of the century, he drew to Mr. Canning, and brought that statesman as candidate to Liverpool in 1812, by personally offering to guarantee his expenses at a time when, though prosperous, he could hardly have been a rich man. His services to the town were

[1] Researches into the ancestry of the Gladstone family have been made by Sir William Fraser, Professor John Veitch, and Mrs. Oliver of Thornwood. Besides his special investigation of the genealogy of the family, Sir W. Fraser devoted some pages in the *Douglas Book* to the Gledstanes of Gledstanes. The surname of Gledstanes occurs at a very early period in the records of Scotland. Families of that name acquired considerable landed estates in the counties of Lanark, Peebles, Roxburgh, and Dumfries. The old castle of Gledstanes, now in ruins, was the principal mansion of the family. The first of the name who has been found on record is Herbert de Gledstanes, who swore fealty to Edward I. in 1296 for lands in the county of Lanark. The Gledstanes long held the office of bailie under the Earls of Douglas, and the connection between the two families seems to have lasted until the fall of the Douglas family. The Gledstanes still continued to figure for many generations on the border. About the middle of the eighteenth century two branches of the family — the Gledstanes of Cocklaw and of Craigs — failed in the direct male line. Mr. Gladstone was descended from a third branch, the Gledstanes of Arthurshiel in Lanarkshire. The first of this line who has been traced is William Gledstanes, who in the year 1551 was laird of Arthurshiel. His lineal descendants continued as owners of that property till William Gledstanes disposed of it and went to live in the town of Biggar about the year 1679. This William Gledstanes was Mr. Gladstone's great-great-grandfather. The connection between these three branches and Herbert de Gledstanes of 1296 has not been ascertained, but he was probably the common ancestor of them all.

BOOK I. 1809–21.

testified by gifts of plate, now in the possession of the elder lines of his descendants, and by a remarkable subscription of six thousand pounds raised to enable him to contest the borough of Lancaster, for which he sat in the parliament of 1818.

At his demise, in December 1851, the value of his estate was, I think, near £600,000. My father was a successful merchant, but considering his long life and means of accumulation, the result represents a success secondary in comparison with that of others whom in native talent and energy he much surpassed. It was a large and strong nature, simple though hasty, profoundly affectionate and capable of the highest devotion in the lines of duty and of love. I think that his intellect was a little intemperate, though not his character. In his old age, spent mainly in retirement, he was our constant [centre of] social and domestic life. My mother, a beautiful and admirable woman, failed in health and left him a widower in 1835, when she was 62.

He then turns to the records of his own childhood, a period that he regarded as closing in September 1821, when he was sent to Eton. He begins with one or two juvenile performances, in no way differing from those of any other infant, — *navita projectus humi*, the mariner flung by force of the waves naked and helpless ashore. He believes that he was strong and healthy, and came well through his childish ailments.

My next recollection belongs to the period of Mr. Canning's first election for Liverpool, in the month of October of the year 1812. Much entertaining went on in my father's house, where Mr. Canning himself was a guest; and on a day of a great dinner I was taken down to the dining room. I was set upon one of the chairs, standing, and directed to say to the company 'Ladies and gentlemen.'

I have, thirdly, a group of recollections which refer to Scotland. Thither my father and mother took me on a journey which they made, I think, in a post-chaise to Edinburgh and Glasgow as its principal points. At Edinburgh our sojourn was in the Royal Hotel, Princes Street. I well remember the rattling of the windows when the castle guns were fired on some great occasion,

CHAP. I.

Æt. 1–12.

probably the abdication of Napoleon, for the date of the journey was, I think, the spring of 1814.

In this journey the situation of Sanquhar, in a close Dumfriesshire valley, impressed itself on my recollection. I never saw Sanquhar again until in the autumn of 1863 (as I believe). As I was whirled along the Glasgow and South-Western railway I witnessed just beneath me lines of building in just such a valley, and said that must be Sanquhar, which it was. My local memory has always been good and very impressible by scenery. I seem to myself never to have forgotten a scene.

I have one other early recollection to record. It must, I think, have been in the year 1815 that my father and mother took me with them on either one or two more journeys. The objective points were Cambridge and London respectively. My father had built, under the very niggard and discouraging laws which repressed rather than encouraged the erection of new churches at that period, the church of St. Thomas at Seaforth, and he wanted a clergyman for it.[1] Guided in these matters very much by the deeply religious temper of my mother, he went with her to Cambridge to obtain a recommendation of a suitable person from Mr. Simeon, whom I saw at the time.[2] I remember his appearance distinctly. He was a venerable man, and although only a fellow of a college, was more ecclesiastically got up than many a dean, or even here and there, perhaps, a bishop of the present less costumed if more ritualistic period. Mr. Simeon, I believe, recommended Mr. Jones, an excellent specimen of the excellent evangelical school of those days. We went to Leicester to hear him preach in a large church, and his text was '*Grow in grace.*' He became eventually archdeacon of Liverpool, and died in great honour a few years ago at much past 90. On the strength of this visit to Cambridge I lately boasted there, even during the lifetime of the aged Provost Okes, that I had been in the university before any one of them.

I think it was at this time that in London we were domiciled in

[1] John Gladstone built St. Thomas's Church, Seaforth, 1814–15; St. Andrew's, Liverpool, about 1816; the church at Leith; the Episcopal chapel at Fasque built and endowed about 1847.

[2] Charles Simeon (1759–1836), who played as conspicuous a part in low church thought as Newman afterwards in high.

BOOK I. 1809–21.

Russell Square, in the house of a brother of my mother, Mr. Colin Robertson; and I was vexed and put about by being forbidden to run freely at my own will into and about the streets, as I had done in Liverpool. But the main event was this: we went to a great service of public thanksgiving at Saint Paul's, and sat in a small gallery annexed to the choir, just over the place where was the Regent, and looking down upon him from behind. I recollect nothing more of the service, nor was I ever present at any public thanksgiving after this in Saint Paul's, until the service held in that cathedral, under my advice as the prime minister, after the highly dangerous illness of the Prince of Wales.

Before quitting the subject of early recollections I must name one which involves another person of some note. My mother took me in 181– to Barley Wood Cottage, near Bristol. Here lived Miss Hannah More, with some of her coeval sisters. I am sure they loved my mother, who was love-worthy indeed. And I cannot help here deviating for a moment into the later portion of the story to record that in 1833 I had the honour of breakfasting with Mr. Wilberforce a few days before his death,[1] and when I entered the house, immediately after the salutation, he said to me in his silvery tones, 'How is your sweet mother?' He had been a guest in my father's house some twelve years before. During the afternoon visit at Barley Wood, Miss Hannah More took me aside and presented to me a little book. It was a copy of her *Sacred Dramas*, and it now remains in my possession, with my name written in it by her. She very graciously accompanied it with a little speech, of which I cannot recollect the conclusion (or apodosis), but it began, 'As you have just come into the world, and I am just going out of it, I therefore,' etc.

I wish that in reviewing my childhood I could regard it as presenting those features of innocence and beauty which I have often seen elsewhere, and indeed, thanks be to God, within the limits of my own home. The best I can say for it is that I do not think it was a vicious childhood. I do not think, trying to look at the past impartially, that I had a strong natural propensity then developed to what are termed the mortal sins. But truth obliges

[1] See below, pp. 106–7.

me to record this against myself. I have no recollection of being a loving or a winning child; or an earnest or diligent or knowledge-loving child. God forgive me. And what pains and shames me most of all is to remember that at most and at best I was, like the sailor in Juvenal,

CHAP. I. ÆT. 1–12.

> digitis a morte remotus,
> Quatuor aut septem;[1]

the plank between me and all the sins was so very thin. I do not indeed intend in these notes to give a history of the inner life, which I think has been with me extraordinarily dubious, vacillating, and above all complex. I reserve them, perhaps, for a more private and personal document; and I may in this way relieve myself from some at least of the risks of falling into an odious Pharisaism. I cannot in truth have been an interesting child, and the only presumption the other way which I can gather from my review is that there was probably something in me worth the seeing, or my father and mother would not so much have singled me out to be taken with them on their journeys.

I was not a devotional child. I have no recollection of early love for the House of God and for divine service: though after my father built the church at Seaforth in 1815, I remember cherishing a hope that he would bequeath it to me, and that I might live in it. I have a very early recollection of hearing preaching in St. George's, Liverpool, but it is this: that I turned quickly to my mother and said, 'When will he have done?' The *Pilgrim's Progress* undoubtedly took a great and fascinating hold upon me, so that anything which I wrote was insensibly moulded in its style; but it was by the force of the allegory addressing itself to the fancy, and was very like a strong impression received from the *Arabian Nights*, and from another work called *Tales of the Genii*. I think it was about the same time that Miss Porter's *Scottish Chiefs*, and especially the life and death of Wallace, used to make me weep profusely. This would be when I was about ten years old. At a much earlier period, say six or seven, I remember praying earnestly, but it was for no higher object than to be spared from the loss of a tooth. Here, however, it may be

[1] XII 58 — 'Removed from death by four or maybe seven fingers' breadth.'

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mentioned in mitigation that the local dentist of those days, in our case a certain Dr. P. of —— Street, Liverpool, was a kind of savage at his work (possibly a very good-natured man too), with no ideas except to smash and crash. My religious recollections, then, are a sad blank. Neither was I a popular boy, though not egregiously otherwise. If I was not a bad boy, I think that I was a boy with a great absence of goodness. I was a child of slow, in some points I think of singularly slow, development. There was more in me perhaps than in the average boy, but it required greatly more time to set itself in order: and just so in adult, and in middle and later life, I acquired very tardily any knowledge of the world, and that simultaneous conspectus of the relations of persons and things which is necessary for the proper performance of duties in the world.

I may mention another matter in extenuation. I received, unless my memory deceives me, very little benefit from teaching. My father was too much occupied, my mother's health was broken. We, the four brothers, had no quarrelling among ourselves: but neither can I recollect any influence flowing down at this time upon me, the junior. One odd incident seems to show that I was meek, which I should not have supposed, not less than thrifty and penurious, a leaning which lay deep, I think, in my nature, and which has required effort and battle to control it. It was this. By some process not easy to explain I had, when I was *probably* seven or eight, and my elder brothers from ten or eleven to fourteen or thereabouts, accumulated no less than twenty shillings in silver. My brothers judged it right to appropriate this fund, and I do not recollect either annoyance or resistance or complaint. But I recollect that they employed the principal part of it in the purchase of four knives, and that they broke the points from the tops of the blades of my knife, lest I should cut my fingers.

Where was the official or appointed teacher all this time? He was the Rev. Mr. Rawson of Cambridge, who had, I suppose, been passed by Mr. Simeon and become private tutor in my father's house. But as he was to be incumbent of the church, the bishop required a parsonage and that he should live in it. Out of this grew a very small school of about twelve boys, to which I went, with some senior brother or brothers remaining for a while.

Mr. Rawson was a good man, of high no-popery opinions. His school afterwards rose into considerable repute, and it had Dean Stanley and the sons of one or more other Cheshire families for pupils. But I think this was not so much due to its intellectual stamina as to the extreme salubrity of the situation on the pure dry sands of the Mersey's mouth, with all the advantages of the strong tidal action and the fresh and frequent north-west winds. At five miles from Liverpool Exchange, the sands, delicious for riding, were one absolute solitude, and only one house looked down on them between us and the town. To return to Mr. Rawson. Everything was unobjectionable. I suppose I learnt something there. But I have no recollection of being under any moral or personal influence whatever, and I doubt whether the preaching had any adaptation whatever to children. As to intellectual training, I believe that, like the other boys, I shirked my work as much as I could. I went to Eton in 1821 after a pretty long spell, in a very middling state of preparation, and wholly without any knowledge or other enthusiasm, unless it were a priggish love of argument which I had begun to develop. I had lived upon a rabbit warren: and what a rabbit warren of a life it is that I have been surveying.

My brother John, three years older than myself, and of a moral character more manly and on a higher level, had chosen the navy, and went off to the preparatory college at Portsmouth. But he evidently underwent persecution for righteousness' sake at the college, which was then (say about 1820) in a bad condition. Of this, though he was never querulous, his letters bore the traces, and I cannot but think they must have exercised upon me some kind of influence for good. As to miscellaneous notices, I had a great affinity with the trades of joiners and of bricklayers. Physically I must have been rather tough, for my brother John took me down at about ten years old to wrestle in the stables with an older lad of that region, whom I threw. Among our greatest enjoyments were undoubtedly the annual Guy Fawkes bonfires, for which we had always liberal allowances of wreck timber and a tar-barrel. I remember seeing, when about eight or nine, my first case of a dead body. It was the child of the head gardener Derbyshire, and was laid in the cottage bed by tender

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hands, with nice and clean accompaniments. It seemed to me pleasing, and in no way repelled me; but it made no deep impression. And now I remember that I used to teach pretty regularly on Sundays in the Sunday-school built by my father near the Primrose bridge. It was, I think, a duty done not under constraint, but I can recollect nothing which associates it with a seriously religious life in myself.[1]

II

To these fragments no long supplement is needed. Little of interest can be certainly established about his far-off ancestral origins, and the ordinary twilight of genealogy overhangs the case of the Glaidstanes, Gledstanes, Gladstanes, Gladstones, whose name is to be found on tombstones and parish rolls, in charter-chests and royal certificates, on the southern border of Scotland. The explorations of the genealogist tell of recognitions of their nobility by Scottish kings in dim ages, but the links are sometimes broken, title-deeds are lost, the same name is attached to estates in different counties, Roxburgh, Peebles, Lanark, and in short until the close of the seventeenth century we linger, in the old poet's phrase, among dreams of shadows. As we have just been told, during the eighteenth century no traces of their gentility survives, and apparently they glided down from moderate lairds to small maltsters. Thomas Gladstones, grandfather of him with whom we are concerned, made his way from Biggar to Leith, and there set up in a modest way as corndealer, wholesale and retail. His wife was a Neilson of Springfield. To them sixteen children were born, and John Gladstones (b. Dec. 11, 1764) was their eldest son. Having established himself in Liverpool, he married in 1792 Jane Hall, a lady of that city, who died without children six years later. In 1800 he took for his second wife Anne Robertson of Dingwall. Her father was of the clan Donnachaidh, and her mother was of kin with Mackenzies, Munros, and other highland stocks.[2] Their son, therefore,

[1] The fragment is undated.

[2] One or two further genealogical *nugæ* are among the papers. A correspondent wrote to Mr. Gladstone

was of unmixed Scottish origins, half highland, half lowland borderer.[1] With the possible exception of Lord Mansfield — the rival of Chatham in parliament, one of the loftiest names among great judges, and chief builder of the commercial law of the English world, a man who might have been prime minister if he had chosen — Mr. Gladstone stands out as far the most conspicuous and powerful of all the public leaders in our history, who have sprung from the northern half of our island. When he had grown to be the most famous man in the realm of the Queen, he said, 'I am not slow to

in 1887: Among the donors to the Craftsman's Hospital, Aberdeen, established in 1633, occurs the name of 'Georg Gladstaines, pewterer, 300 merks' (£16, 13s. 4d. sterling), 1698. George joined the Hammerman Craft in 1656, when he would have been about 25 years of age. His signature is still in existence appended to the burgess oath. Very few craftsmen could sign their names at that period — not one in twenty — so that George must have been fairly well educated. Mr. Gladstone replied that it was the first time that he had heard of the name so far north, and that the pewterer was probably one planted out. At Dundee (1890) he mentioned that others of his name and blood appeared on the burgess-roll as early as the fifteenth century. As for his maternal grandfather, the *Inverness Courier* (March 2, year not given) has the following: — 'Provost Robertson of Dingwall was a descendant of the ancient family of the Robertsons of Inshes, of whose early settlement in the north the following particulars are known: The first was a member of the family of Struan, Perthshire, and was a merchant in Inverness in 1420. In the battle of *Blair-na-leine*, fought at the west end of Loch-Lochy in 1544, John Robertson, a descendant of the above, acted as standard-bearer to Lord Lovat. This battle was fought between the Frasers and Macdonalds of Clanranald, and derived its appellation from the circumstance of the combatants fighting only in their shirts. The contest was carried on with such bloody determination, foot to foot and claymore to claymore, that only *four* of the Frasers and *ten* of the Macdonalds returned to tell the tale. The former family was well nigh extirpated; tradition, however, states that sixteen widows of the Frasers who had been slain, shortly afterwards, as a providential succour, gave birth to sixteen sons! From the bloody onslaught at Loch-Lochy young Robertson returned home scathless, and his brave and gallant conduct was the theme of praise with all. Some time thereafter he married the second daughter of Paterson of Wester and Easter Inshes, the eldest being married to Cuthbert of Macbeth's Castlehill, now known as the Crown lands, possessed by Mr. Fraser of Abertarff. On the death of Paterson, his father-in-law, Wester Inshes became the property of young Robertson, and Easter Inshes that of the Cuthberts, who, for the sake of distinction, changed the name to Castlehill. The Robertsons, in regular succession until the present time, possess the fine estate of Inshes; while that of Castlehill, which belonged to the powerful Cuthberts for so many generations, knows them no more. The family of Inshes, in all ages, stood high in respect throughout the highlands, and many of them had signalised themselves in upholding the rights of their country; and the worthy Provost Robertson of Dingwall had no less distinguished himself, who, with other important reforms, had cleared away the last burdensome relic of feudal times in that ancient burgh.'

[1] The other sons and daughters of this marriage were Thomas, *d.* 1889; Robertson, *d.* 1875; John Neilson, *d.* 1863; Anne, *d.* 1829; Helen Jane, *d.* 1880.

BOOK I. 1809–21.

claim the name of Scotsman, and even if I were, there is the fact staring me in the face that not a drop of blood runs in my veins except what is derived from a Scottish ancestry.'[1] An illustrious opponent once described him, by way of hitting his singular duality of disposition, as an ardent Italian in the custody of a Scotsman. It is easy to make too much of race, but when we are puzzled by Mr. Gladstone's seeming contrarieties of temperament, his union of impulse with caution, of passion with circumspection, of pride and fire with self-control, of Ossianic flight with a steady foothold on the solid earth, we may perhaps find a sort of explanation in thinking of him as a highlander in the custody of a lowlander.

Of John Gladstone something more remains to be said. About 1783 he was made a partner by his father in the business at Leith, and here he saved five hundred pounds. Four years later, probably after a short period of service, he was admitted to a partnership with two corn-merchants at Liverpool, his contribution to the total capital of four thousand pounds being fifteen hundred, of which his father lent him five hundred, and a friend another five at five per cent. In 1787 he thought the plural ending of his name sounded awkwardly in the style of the firm, Corrie, Gladstones, and Bradshaw, so he dropped the *s*.[2] He visited London to enlarge his knowledge of the corn trade in Mark Lane, and here became acquainted with Sir Claude Scott, the banker (not yet, however, a baronet). Scott was so impressed by his extraordinary vigour and shrewdness as to talk of a partnership, but Gladstone's existing arrangement in Liverpool was settled for fourteen years. Sometime in the nineties he was sent to America to purchase corn, with unlimited confidence from Sir Claude Scott. On his arrival, he found a severe scarcity and enormous prices. A large number of vessels had been chartered for the enterprise, and were on their way to him for cargoes. To send them back in ballast would be a disaster. Thrown entirely on his own

[1] At Dundee, Oct. 29, 1890.

[2] In 1835 formal difficulties arose in connection with the purchase of a government annuity, and then he seems to have taken out letters patent authorising the change in the name.

resources, he travelled south from New York, making the best purchases of all sorts that he could; then loaded his ships with timber and other commodities, one only of them with flour; and the loss on the venture, which might have meant ruin, did not exceed a few hundred pounds. Energy and resource of this kind made fortune secure, and when the fourteen years of partnership expired, Gladstone continued business on his own account, with a prosperity that was never broken. He brought his brothers to Liverpool, but it was to provide for them, not to assist himself, says Mr. Gladstone; 'and he provided for many young men in the same way. I never knew him reject any kind of work in aid of others that offered itself to him.'

It was John Gladstone's habit, we are told, to discuss all sorts of questions with his children, and nothing was ever taken for granted between him and his sons. 'He could not understand,' says the illustrious one among them, 'nor tolerate those who, perceiving an object to be good, did not at once and actively pursue it; and with all this energy he joined a corresponding warmth and, so to speak, eagerness of affection, a keen appreciation of humour, in which he found a rest, and an indescribable frankness and simplicity of character, which, crowning his other qualities, made him, I think (and I strive to think impartially), the most interesting old man I have ever known.'[1]

To his father's person and memory, Mr. Gladstone's fervid and affectionate devotion remained unbroken. 'One morning,' writes a female relative of his, 'when I was breakfasting alone with Mr. Gladstone at Carlton House Terrace something led to his speaking of his father. I seem to see him now, rising from his chair, standing in front of the chimney-piece, and in strains of fervid eloquence dwelling on the grandeur, the breadth and depth of his character, his generosity, his nobleness, last and greatest of all — his loving nature. His eyes filled with tears as he exclaimed: "None but his children can know what torrents of tenderness flowed from his heart."'

The successful merchant was also the active-minded

[1] *Memoirs of J. R. Hope-Scott*, ii. p. 290.

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citizen. 'His force,' says his son, 'soon began to be felt as a prominent and then a foremost member of the community.' He had something of his descendant's inextinguishable passion for pamphleteering, and the copious effusion of public letters and articles. As was inevitable in a Scotsman of his social position at that day, when tory rule of a more tyrannic stamp than was ever known in England since the Revolution of 1688, had reduced constitutional liberty in Scotland to a shadow, John Gladstone came to Liverpool a whig, and a whig he remained until Canning raised the flag of a new party inside the entrenchments of Eldonian toryism.

In 1812 Canning, who had just refused Lord Liverpool's proffer of the foreign office because he would not serve under Castlereagh as leader in the House of Commons, was invited by John Gladstone to stand for Liverpool. He was elected in triumph over Brougham, and held the seat through four elections, down to 1822, when he was succeeded by Huskisson, whom he described to the constituency as the best man of business in England, and one of the ablest practical statesmen that could engage in the concerns of a commercial country. The speeches made to his constituents during the ten years for which he served them are excellent specimens of Canning's rich, gay, aspiring eloquence. In substance they abound in much pure toryism, and his speech after the Peterloo massacre, and upon the topics relating to public meetings, sedition, and parliamentary reform, though by sonorous splendour and a superb plausibility fascinating to the political neophyte, is by no means free from froth, without much relation either to social facts or to popular principles. On catholic emancipation he followed Pitt, as he did in an enlarged view of commercial policy. At Liverpool he made his famous declaration that his political allegiance was buried in Pitt's grave. At one at least of these performances the youthful William Gladstone was present, but it was at home that he learned Canningite doctrine. At Seaforth House Canning spent the days between the death of Castlereagh and his own recall to power, while he was waiting for the date fixed for his voyage to take up the viceroyalty of India.

As from whig John Gladstone turned Canningite, so from

presbyterian also he turned churchman. He paid the penalty of men who change their party, and was watched with a critical eye by old friends; but he was a liberal giver for beneficent public purposes, and in 1811 he was honoured by the freedom of Liverpool. His ambition naturally pointed to parliament, and he was elected first for Lancaster in 1818, and next for Woodstock in 1820, two boroughs of extremely easy political virtue. Lancaster cost him twelve thousand pounds, towards which his friends in Liverpool contributed one-half. In 1826 he was chosen at Berwick, but was unseated the year after. His few performances in the House were not remarkable. He voted with ministers, and on the open question of catholic emancipation he went with Canning and Plunket. He was one of the majority who by six carried Plunket's catholic motion in 1821, and the matter figures in the earliest of the hundreds of surviving letters from his youngest son, then over eleven, and on the eve of his departure for Eton: —

*Seaforth, Mar.* 10, 1821.

I address these few lines to you to know how my dear mother is, to thank you for your kind letter, and to know whether Edward may get two padlocks for the wicket and large shore gate. They are now open, and the people make a thoroughfare of the green walk and the carriage road. I read Mr. Plunket's speech, and I admire it exceedingly. I enclose a letter from Mr. Rawson to you. He told me to-day that Mrs. R. was a great deal better. Write to me again as soon as you can. — Ever your most affectionate and dutiful son, W. E. Gladstone.

In after years he was fond of recalling how the Liverpool with which he had been most familiar (1810–20), though the second commercial town in the kingdom, did not exceed 100,000 of population, and how the silver cloud of smoke that floated above her resembled that which might now appear over any secondary borough or village of the country. 'I have seen wild roses growing upon the very ground that is now the centre of the borough of Bootle. All that land is now partly covered with residences and partly with places of business and industry; but in my time but one single house

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stood upon the space between Primrose brook and the town of Liverpool.' Among his early recollections was 'the extraordinarily beautiful spectacle of a dock delivery on the Mersey after a long prevalence of westerly winds followed by a change. Liverpool cannot imitate that now [1892], at least not for the eye.'

III

The Gladstone firm was mainly an East India house, but in the last ten years of his mercantile course John Gladstone became the owner of extensive plantations of sugar and coffee in the West Indies, some in Jamaica, others in British Guiana or Demerara. The infamy of the slave-trade had been abolished in 1807, but slave labour remained, and the Liverpool merchant, like a host of other men of equal respectability and higher dignity, including many peers and even some bishops, was a slaveholder. Everybody who has ever read one of the most honourable and glorious chapters in our English history knows the case of the missionary John Smith.[1] In 1823 an outbreak of the slaves occurred in Demerara, and one of John Gladstone's plantations happened to be its centre. The rising was stamped out with great cruelty in three days. Martial law, the savage instrument of race passion, was kept in force for over seventy-five days. Fifty negroes were hanged, many were shot down in the thickets, others were torn in pieces by the lash of the cart-whip. Smith was arrested, although he had in fact done his best to stop the rising. Tried before a court in which every rule of evidence was tyrannically set aside, he was convicted on hearsay and condemned to death. Before the atrocious sentence could be commuted by the home authorities, the fiery heat and noisome vapours of his prison killed him. The death of the Demerara missionary, it has been truly said, was an event as fatal to slavery in the West Indies, as the execution of John Brown was its death-blow in the United States.[2] Brougham in 1824 brought the

[1] The story of John Smith is excellently told in Walpole (iii. p. 178), and in Miss Martineau's *History of the Peace*, bk. ii. ch. vi. But Mr. Hobhouse has worked it out with diligence and precision in special reference to John Gladstone: *Early Life*, pp. 36–47.

[2] Trevelyan's *Macaulay*, i. p. 111, where the reader will also find a fine passage from Macaulay's speech before the Anti-Slavery Society upon the matter — the first speech he ever made.

case before the House of Commons, and in the various discussions upon it the Gladstone estates made rather a prominent figure. John Gladstone became involved in a heated and prolonged controversy as to the management of his plantations; as we shall see, it did not finally die down till 1841. He was an indomitable man. In a newspaper discussion through a long series of letters. he did not defend slavery in the abstract, but protested against the abuse levelled at the planters by all 'the intemperate, credulous, designing, or interested individuals who followed the lead of that well-meaning but mistaken man, Mr. Wilberforce.' He denounced the missionaries as hired emissaries, whose object seemed to be rather to revolutionise the colonies than to diffuse religion among the people.

In 1830 he published a pamphlet, in the form of a letter to Sir Robert Peel,[1] to explain that negroes were happier when forced to work; that, as their labour was essential to the welfare of the colonies, he considered the difficulties in the way of emancipation insurmountable; that it was not for him to seek to destroy a system that an over-ruling Providence had seen fit to permit in certain climates since the very formation of society; and finally with a Parthian bolt, he hinted that the public would do better to look to the condition of the lower classes at home than to the negroes in the colonies. The pamphlet made its mark, and was admitted by the abolitionists to be an attempt of unusual ingenuity to varnish the most heinous of national crimes. Three years later, when emancipation came, and the twenty million pounds of compensation were distributed, John Gladstone appears to have received, individually and apart from his partnerships, a little over seventy-five thousand pounds for 1609 slaves.[2]

It is as well, though in anticipation of the order of time, to complete our sketch. In view of the approach of full

[1] 'A statement of facts connected with the present state of slavery in the British sugar and coffee colonies, and in the United States of America, together with a view of the present situation of the lower classes in the United Kingdom.'

[2] In Demerara the average price of slaves from 1822 to 1830 had been £114, 11s. 5¼d. The rate of compensation per slave averaged £51, 17s. 1½d., but it is of interest to note that the slaves on the Vreedenhoop estate were valued at £53, 15s. 6d.

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abolition, John Gladstone induced Lord Glenelg, the whig secretary of state, to issue an order in council (1837) permitting the West Indian planters to ship coolies from India on terms drawn up by the planters themselves. Objections were made with no effect by the governor at Demerara, a humane and vigorous man, who had done much work as military engineer under Wellington, and who, after abolishing the flogging of female slaves in the Bahamas, now set such an iron yoke upon the planters and their agents in Demerara, that he said 'he could sleep satisfied that no person in the colony could be punished without his knowledge and sanction.'[1] The importation of coolies raised old questions in new forms. The voyage from India was declared to reproduce the horrors of the middle passage of the vanished Guinea slavers; the condition of the coolie on the sugar plantations was drawn in a light only less lurid than the case of the African negro; and John Gladstone was again in hot water. Thomas Gladstone, his eldest son, defended him in parliament (Aug. 3, 1839), and commissioners sent to inquire into the condition of the various Gladstone plantations reported that the coolies on Vreedestein appeared contented and happy on the whole; no one had ever maltreated or beaten them except in one case; and those on Vreedenhoop appeared perfectly contented. The interpreter, who had abused them, had been fined, punished, and dismissed. Upon the motion of W. E. Gladstone, these reports were laid upon the table of the House in 1840.[2]

We shall have not unimportant glimpses, as our story unfolds itself, of all these transactions. Meanwhile, it is interesting to note that the statesman whose great ensign was to be human freedom, was thus born in a family where the palliation of slavery must have made a daily topic. The union, moreover, of fervid evangelical religion with antagonism to abolition must in those days have been rare, and in spite of his devoted faith in his father the youthful

[1] *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, Sir James Carmichael Smyth.

[2] He took Follett's opinion (Aug. 5, 1841) on the question of applying for a criminal information against the publisher of an article stating how many slaves had been worked to death on his father's plantations. The great advocate wisely recommended him to leave it alone.

CHAP. I.

Æt. 1–12.

Gladstone may well have had uneasy moments. If so, he perhaps consoled himself with the authority of Canning. Canning, in 1823, had formally laid down the neutral principles common to the statesmen of the day: that amelioration of the lot of the negro slave was the utmost limit of action, and that his freedom as a result of amelioration was the object of a pious hope, and no more. Canning described the negro as a being with the form of a man and the intellect of a child. 'To turn him loose in the manhood of his physical strength, in the maturity of his physical passions, but in the infancy of his uninstructed reason, would be to raise up a creature resembling the splendid fiction of a recent romance,[1] the hero of which constructs a human form with all the corporal capabilities of a man, but being unable to impart to the work of his hands a perception of right and wrong, he finds too late that he has only created a more than mortal power of doing mischief.' 'I was bred,' said Mr. Gladstone when risen to meridian splendour, 'under the shadow of the great name of Canning; every influence connected with that name governed the politics of my childhood and of my youth; with Canning, I rejoiced in the removal of religious disabilities, and in the character which he gave to our policy abroad; with Canning, I rejoiced in the opening he made towards the establishment of free commercial interchanges between nations; with Canning, and under the shadow of the yet more venerable name of Burke, my youthful mind and imagination were impressed.'[2] On slavery and even the slave trade, Burke too had argued against total abolition. 'I confess,' he said, 'I trust infinitely more (according to the sound principles of those who ever have at any time meliorated the state of mankind) to the effect and influence of religion than to all the rest of the regulations put together.'[3]

[1] *Frankenstein* was published in 1818.

[2] House of Commons, April 27, 1866.

[3] *Letter to Dundas, with a sketch of a Negro Code*, 1792. But see *Life of W. Wilberforce*, v. p. 157.

## CHAPTER II

### ETON

*(1821–1827)*

It is in her public schools and universities that the youth of England are, by a discipline which shallow judgments have sometimes attempted to undervalue, prepared for the duties of public life. There are rare and splendid exceptions, to be sure, but in my conscience I believe, that England would not be what she is without her system of public education, and that no other country can become what England is, without the advantages of such a system. — Canning.

It is difficult to discern the true dimensions of objects in that mirage which covers the studies of one's youth. — Gladstone.

BOOK I. 1821–27.

In September 1821, the young Gladstone was sent to Eton. Life at Eton lasted over six years, until the Christmas of 1827. It impressed images that never faded, and left traces in heart and mind that the waves of time never effaced, — so profound is the early writing on our opening page. Canning's words at the head of our present chapter set forth a superstition that had a powerful hold on the English governing class of that day, and the new Etonian never shook it off. His attachment to Eton grew with the lapse of years; to him it was ever 'the queen of all schools.'

'I went,' he says, 'under the wing of my eldest brother, then in the upper division, and this helped my start and much mitigated the sense of isolation that attends the first launch at a public school.' The door of his dame's house looked down the Long Walk, while the windows looked into the very crowded churchyard: from this he never received the smallest inconvenience, though it was his custom (when master of the room) to sleep with his window open both summer and winter. The school, said the new scholar, has

only about four hundred and ninety fellows in it, which was considered uncommonly small. He likes his tutor so much that he would not exchange him for any ten. He has various rows with Mrs. Shurey, his dame, and it is really a great shame the way they are fed. He and his brother have far the best room in the dame's house. His captain is very good-natured. Fighting is a favourite diversion, hardly a day passing without one, two, three, or even four more or less mortal combats.

You will be glad to hear, he writes to his Highland aunt Johanna (November 13, 1821), of an instance of the highest and most honourable spirit in a highlander labouring under great disadvantages. His name is Macdonald (he once had a brother here remarkably clever, and a capital fighter). He is tough as iron, and about the strongest fellow in the school of his size. Being pushed out of his seat in school by a fellow of the name of Arthur, he airily asked him to give it him again, which being refused, with the additional insult that he might try what he could do to take it from him, Macdonald very properly took him at his word, and began to push him out of his seat. Arthur struck at him with all his might, and gave him so violent a blow that Macdonald was almost knocked backwards, but disdaining to take a blow from even a fellow much bigger than himself, he returned Arthur's blow with interest; they began to fight; after Macdonald had made him bleed at both his nose and his mouth, he finished the affair very triumphantly by knocking the arrogant Arthur backwards over the form without receiving a single blow of any consequence. He also labours under the additional disadvantage of being a new fellow, and of not knowing any one here. Arthur in a former battle put his finger out of joint, and as soon as it is recovered they are to have a regular battle in the playing fields.

Other encounters are described with equal zest, especially one where 'the honour of Liverpool was bravely sustained,' superior weight and size having such an advantage over toughness and strength, that the foe of Liverpool was too badly bruised and knocked about to appear in school. On another occasion, 'to the great joy' of the narrator, an oppidan vanquished a colleger, though the colleger fought

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so furiously that he put his fingers out of joint, and went back to the classic studies that soften manners, with a face broken and quite black. The Windsor and Slough coaches used to stop under the wall of the playing fields to watch these desperate affrays, and once at least in these times a boy was killed. With plenty of fighting went on plenty of flogging; for the headmaster was the redoubtable Dr. Keate, with whom the appointed instrument of moral regeneration in the childish soul was the birch rod; who on heroic occasions was known to have flogged over eighty boys on a single summer day; and whose one mellow regret in the evening of his life was that he had not flogged far more. Religious instruction, as we may suppose, was under these circumstances reduced to zero; there was no trace of the influence of the evangelical party, at that moment the most active of all the religious sections; and the ancient and pious munificence of Henry VI. now inspired a scene that was essentially little better than pagan, modified by an official church of England varnish. At Eton, Mr. Gladstone wrote of this period forty years after, 'the actual teaching of Christianity was all but dead, though happily none of its forms had been surrendered.'[1]

Science even in its rudiments fared as ill as its eternal rival, theology. There was a mathematical master, but nobody learned anything from him, or took any notice of him. In his anxiety for position the unfortunate man asked Keate if he might wear a cap and gown. 'That's as you please,' said Keate. 'Must the boys touch their hats to me?' 'That's as they please,' replied the genial doctor.[2] Gladstone first picked up a little mathematics, not at Eton, but during the holidays, going to Liverpool for the purpose, first in 1824 and more seriously in 1827. He seems to have paid much attention to French, and even then to have attained considerable proficiency. 'When I was at Eton,' Mr. Gladstone said, 'we knew very little indeed, but we knew it accurately.' 'There were many shades of distinction,' he observed, 'among the fellows who received what was supposed to be, and was in many respects, their education. Some of those

[1] *Gleanings*, vii. p. 138. [2] A story sometimes told of Provost Goodall.

shades of distinction were extremely questionable, and the comparative measures of honour allotted to talent, industry, and idleness were undoubtedly such as philosophy would not justify. But no boy was ever estimated either more or less because he had much money to spend. It added nothing to him if he had much, it took nothing from him if he had little.' A sharp fellow who worked, and a stupid fellow who was idle, were both of them in good odour enough, but a stupid boy who presumed to work was held to be an insufferable solecism.[1]

My tutor was the Rev. H. H. Knapp (practically all tutors were clergymen in those days). He was a reputed whig, an easy and kind-tempered man with a sense of scholarship, but no power of discipline, and no energy of desire to impress himself upon his pupils. I recollect but one piece of advice received later from him. It was that I should form my poetical taste upon Darwin, whose poems (the 'Botanic Garden' and 'Loves of the Plants') I obediently read through in consequence. I was placed in the middle remove fourth form, a place slightly better than the common run, but inferior to what a boy of good preparation or real excellence would have taken. My nearest friend of the first period was W. W. Farr, a boy of intelligence, something over my age, next above me in the school.

At this time there was not in me any desire to know or to excel. My first pursuits were football and then cricket; the first I did not long pursue, and in the second I never managed to rise above mediocrity and what was termed 'the twenty-two.' There was a barrister named Henry Hall Joy, a connection of my father through his first wife, and a man who had taken a first-class at Oxford. He was very kind to me, and had made some efforts to inspire me with a love of books, if not of knowledge. Indeed I had read Froissart, and Hume with Smollett, but only for the battles, and always skipping when I came to the sections headed 'A Parliament.' Joy had a taste for classics, and made visions for me of honours at Oxford. But the subject only danced before my eyes as a will-of-the-wisp, and without attracting me. I remained stagnant without heart or

[1] At Marlborough, Feb. 3, 1877; at Mill Hill School, June 11, 1879.

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hope. A change however arrived about Easter 1822. My 'remove' was then under Hawtrey (afterwards head-master and provost), who was always on the lookout for any bud which he could warm with a little sunshine.

He always described Hawtrey as the life of the school, the man to whom Eton owed more than to any of her sons during the century. Though not his pupil, it was from him that Gladstone, when in the fourth form, received for the first time incentives to exertion. 'It was entirely due to Hawtrey,' he records in a fragment, 'that I first owed the reception of a spark, the *divinae particulam aurae*, and conceived a dim idea, that in some time, manner, and degree, I might come to know. Even then, as I had really no instructor, my efforts at Eton, down to 1827, were perhaps of the purest plodding ever known.'

Evidently he was not a boy of special mark during the first three years at Eaton. In the evening he played chess and cards, and usually lost. He claimed in after life that he had once taken a drive in a hired tandem, but Etonians who knew him as a schoolboy decided that an aspiring memory here made him boast of crimes that were not his. He was assiduous in the Eton practice of working a small boat, whether skiff, funny, or wherry, single-handed. In the masquerade of Montem he figured complacently in all the glories of the costume of a Greek patriot, for he was a faithful Canningite; the heroic struggle against the Turk was at its fiercest, and it was the year when Byron died at Missolonghi. Of Montem as an institution he thought extremely ill, 'the whole thing a wretched waste of time and money, a most ingenious contrivance to exhibit us as baboons, a bore in the full sense of the word.' He did not stand aside from the harmless gaieties of boyish life, but he rigidly refused any part in boyish indecorums. He was, in short, just the diligent, cheerful, healthy-minded schoolboy that any good father would have his son to be. He enjoys himself with his brother at the Christopher, and is glad to record that 'Keate did not make any jaw about being so late.' Half a dozen of them met every whole holiday or

half, and went up Salt Hill to bully the fat waiter, eat toasted cheese, and drink egg-wine.

He started, as we have already seen, in middle fourth form. In the spring of 1822 Hawtrey said to him: 'Continue to do as well as this, and I will send you up for good again before the fourth of June.' Before the end of June, he tells his sailor brother of his success: 'It far exceeds the most sanguine expectations I ever entertained. I have got into the remove between the fourth and fifth forms. I have been sent up for good a second time, and have taken seven places.' In the summer of 1823 he announces that he has got into the fifth form after taking sixteen places, and here instead of fagging he acquires the blessed power himself to fag. In passing he launches, for the first recorded time, against the master of the remove from which he has just been promoted, an invective that in volume and intensity anticipates the wrath of later attacks on Neapolitan kings and Turkish sultans.

His letters written from Eton breathe in every line the warm breath of family affection, and of all those natural pieties that had so firm a root in him from the beginning to the end. Of the later store of genius and force that the touch of time was so soon to kindle into full glow, they gave but little indication. We smile at the precocious *copia fandi* that at thirteen describes the language of an admonishing acquaintance as 'so friendly, manly, sound, and disinterested that notwithstanding his faults I must always think well of him.' He sends contributions to his brother's scrap-book, and one of the first of them, oddly enough, in view of one of the great preoccupations of his later life, is a copy of Lord Edward Fitzgerald's stanzas on the night of his arrest: —

> 'O Ireland, my country, the hour
> Of thy pride and thy splendour has passed,
> And the chain which was spurned in thy moment of power,
> Hangs heavy around thee at last.'

The temper and dialect of evangelical religion are always there. A friend of the family dies, and the boy pours out his regret, but after all what is the merely natural death of

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Dr. N. compared with the awful state of a certain clergyman, also an intimate friend, who has not only been guilty of attending a fancy ball, but has followed that vicious prelude by even worse enormities unnamed, that surely cannot escape the vigilance and the reproof of his bishop?

His father is the steady centre of his life. 'My father,' he writes to his brother, 'is as active in mind and projects as ever; he has two principal plans now in embryo. One of these is a railroad between Liverpool and Manchester for the conveyance of goods by locomotive-steam-engine. The other is for building a bridge over the Mersey at Runcorn.' In May 1827, the Gloucester and Berkeley canal is opened: 'a great and enterprising undertaking, but still there is no fear of it beating Liverpool.' Meanwhile, 'what prodigiously quick travelling to leave Eton at twelve on Monday, and reach home at eight on Tuesday!' 'I have,' he says in 1826, 'lately been writing several letters in the *Liverpool Courier*.' His father had been attacked in the local prints for sundry economic inconsistencies, and the controversial pen that was to know no rest for more than seventy years to come, was now first employed, like the pious Æneas bearing off Anchises, in the filial duty of repelling his sire's assailants. Ignorant of his nameless champion, John Gladstone was much amused and interested by the anonymous 'Friend to Fair Dealing,' while the son was equally diverted by the criticisms and conjectures of the parent.

With the formidable Keate the boy seems to have fared remarkably well, and there are stories that he was even one of the tyrant's favourites.[1] His school work was diligently

[1] Doyle tells a story of the boy being flogged for bringing wine into his study. When questioned on this, Mr. Gladstone said, 'I *was* flogged, but not for anything connected in any way with wine, of which, by the by, my father supplied me with a small amount, and insisted upon my drinking it, or some of it, all the time that I was at Eton. The reason why I was flogged was this. I was præpostor of the remove on a certain day, and from kindness or good nature was induced to omit from the list of boys against whom H. [the master] had complained, and who ought to have been flogged next day, the names of three offenders. The three boys in question got round me with a story that their friends were coming down from London to see them, and that if they were put down on the flogging list they could not meet their friends. Next day when I went into school H. roared out in a voice of thunder, "Gladstone, put down your own name on the list of boys to be flogged."' Mr. Gladstone on this occasion told another tale of this worthy's

supplemented. His daily reading in 1826 covers a good deal of miscellaneous ground, including Molière and Racine, Blair's *Sermons* ('not very substantial'), *Tom Jones*, Tomline's *Life of Pitt*, Waterland's *Commentaries*, Leslie *on Deism*, Locke's *Defence of The Reasonableness of Christianity*, which he finds excellent; *Paradise Lost*, Milton's *Latin Poems* and *Epitaphium Damonis* ('exquisite'), Massinger's *Fatal Dowry* ('most excellent'), Ben Jonson's *Alchemist;* Scott, including the *Bride of Lammermoor* ('a beautiful tale, indeed,' and in after life his favourite of them all), Burke, Clarendon, and others of the shining host whose very names are music to a scholar's ear. In the same year he reads 'a most violent article on Milton by Macaulay, fair and unfair, clever and silly, allegorical and bombastic, republican and anti-episcopal — a strange composition, indeed.' In 1827 he went steadily through the second half of Gibbon, whom he pronounces, 'elegant and acute as he is, not so clear, so able, so attractive as Hume; does not impress my mind so much.' In the same year he reads Coxe's *Walpole*, *Don Quixote*, Hallam's *Constitutional History*, *Measure for Measure* and *Much Ado*, Massinger's *Grand Duke of Florence*, Ford's *Love's Melancholy* ('much of it good, the end remarkably beautiful') and *Broken Heart* (which he liked better than either the other or '*Tis Pity*), Locke *on Toleration* ('much repetition').

There is, of course, a steady refrain of Greek iambics, Greek anapæsts, 'an easy and nice metre,' 'a hodge-podge lot of hendecasyllables,' and thirty alcaic stanzas for a holiday task. Mention is made of many sermons on 'Redeeming the time,' 'Weighed in the balance and found wanting,' 'Cease to do evil, learn to do well,' and the other ever unexhausted texts. One constant entry, we may be sure, is

'humour.' 'One day H. called out to the præpostor, "Write down Hamilton's name to be flogged for breaking my window." "I never broke your window, sir," exclaimed Hamilton. "Præpostor," retorted H., "write down Hamilton's name for breaking my window and lying." "Upon my soul, sir, I did not do it," ejaculated the boy, with increased emphasis. "Præpostor, write down Hamilton's name for breaking my window, lying, and swearing." Against this final sentence there was no appeal, and, accordingly, Hamilton was flogged (I believe unjustly) next day.' — F. Lawley in *Daily Telegraph*, May 20, 1898.

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'Read Bible,' with Mant's notes. In a mood of deep piety he is prepared for confirmation. His appearance at this time was recalled by one who had been his fag, 'as a good-looking, rather delicate youth, with a pale face and brown curling hair, always tidy and well dressed.'[1]

He became captain of the fifth at the end of October 1826, and on February 20, 1827, Keate put him into the sixth. 'Was very civil, indeed; told me to take pains, etc.; to be careful in using my authority, etc.' He finds the sixth very preferable to all other parts of the school, both as regards pleasure and opportunity for improvement. They are more directly under the eye of Keate; he treats them with more civility and speaks to them differently. So the days follow one another very much alike — studious, cheerful, sociable, sedulous. The debates in parliament take up a good deal of his time, and he is overwhelmed by the horrible news of the defeat of the catholics in the House of Commons (March 8, 1827). On a summer's day in 1826, 'Mr. Canning here; inquired after me and missed me.' He was not at Eton but at home when he heard of Mr. Canning's death. 'Personally I must remember his kindness and condescension, especially when he spoke to me of some verses which H. Joy had injudiciously mentioned to him.'

II

Youthful intellect is imitative, and in a great school so impregnated as Eton with the spirit of public life and political association, the few boys with active minds mimicked the strife of parliament in their debating society, and copied the arts of journalism in the *Eton Miscellany*. In both fields the young Gladstone took a leading part. The debating society was afflicted with 'the premonitory lethargy of death,' but the assiduous energy of Gaskell, seconded by the gifts of Gladstone, Hallam, and Doyle, soon sent a new pulse beating through it. The politics of the hour, that is to say everything not fifty years off, were forbidden ground; but the execution of Strafford or of his royal master, the

[1] *Temple Bar*, Feb. 1883.

deposition of Richard II., the last four years of the reign of Queen Anne, the Peerage bill of 1719, the characters of Harley and Bolingbroke, were themes that could be made by ingenious youth to admit a hundred cunning sidelights upon the catholic question, the struggle of the Greeks for independence, the hard case of Queen Caroline, and the unlawfulness of swamping the tories in the House of Lords. On duller afternoons they argued on the relative claims of mathematics and metaphysics to be the better discipline of the human mind; whether duelling is or is not inconsistent with the character that we ought to seek; or whether the education of the poor is on the whole beneficial. It was on this last question (October 29, 1825) that the orator who made his last speech seventy years later, now made his first. 'Made my first or maiden speech at the society,' he enters in his diary, 'on education of the poor; funked less than I thought I should, by much.' It is a curious but a characteristic circumstance not that so many of his Eton speeches were written out, but that the manuscript should have been thriftily preserved by him all through the long space of intervening years. 'Mr. President,' it begins, 'in this land of liberty, in this age of increased and gradually increasing civilization, we shall hope to find few, if indeed any, among the higher classes who are eager or willing to obstruct the moral instruction and mental improvement of their fellow creatures in the humbler walks of life. If such there are, let them at length remember that the poor are endowed with the same reason, though not blessed with the same temporal advantages. Let them but admit, what I think no one can deny, that they are placed in an elevated situation principally for the purpose of doing good to their fellow creatures. Then by what argument can they repel, by what pretence can they evade the duty?' And so forth and so forth. Already we seem to hear the born speaker in the amplitude of rhetorical form in which, juvenile though it may be, a commonplace is cast. 'Is human grandeur so stable that they may deny to others that which they would in an humble situation desire themselves? Or has human pride

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reached such a pitch of arrogance that they have learned to defy both right and reason, to reject the laws of natural kindness that ought to reign in the breast of all, and to look on their fellow countrymen as the refuse of mankind? . . . Is it morally just or politically expedient to keep down the industry and genius of the artisan, to blast his rising hopes, to quell his spirit? A thirst for knowledge has arisen in the minds of the poor; let them satisfy it with wholesome nutriment and beware lest driven to despair,' et cetera. Crude enough, if we please; but the year was 1826, and we may feel that the boyish speaker is already on the generous side and has the gift of fruitful sympathies.

In the spacious tournaments of old history, we may smile to hear debating forms and ceremony applied to everlasting controversies. 'Sir,' he opens on one occasion, 'I declare that as far as regards myself, I shall have very little difficulty in stating my grounds on which I give my vote for James Graham [the Marquis of Montrose]. It is because I look upon him as a hero, not merely endowed with that animal ferocity which has often been the sole qualification which has obtained men that appellation from the multitude — I should be sorry indeed if he had no testimonials of his merits, save such as arise from the mad and thoughtless exclamations of popular applause.' In the same gallant style (Jan. 26, 1826) he votes for Marcus Aurelius, in answer to the question whether Trajan has any equal among the Roman emperors from Augustus onwards. Another time the question was between John Hampden and Clarendon. 'Sir, I look back with pleasure to the time when we unanimously declared our disapprobation of the impeachment of the Earl of Strafford. I wish I could hope for the same unanimity now, but I will endeavour to regulate myself by the same principles as directed me then. . . . Now, sir, with regard to the impeachment of the five members, it is really a little extraordinary to hear the honourable opener talking of the violence offered by the king, and the terror of the parliament. Sir, do we not all know that the king at that time had neither friends nor wealth? . . . Did the return of these members with a triumphant mob

accompanying them indicate terror? Did the demands of the parliament or the insolence of their language show it?' So he proceeds through all the well-worn arguments; and 'therefore it is,' he concludes, 'that I give my vote to the Earl of Clarendon, because he gave his support to the falling cause of monarchy; because he stood by his church and his king; because he adopted the part which loyalty, reason, and moderation combined to dictate. . . . Poverty, banishment, and disgrace he endured without a murmur; he still adhered to the cause of justice, he still denounced the advocates of rebellion, and if he failed in his reward in life, oh, sir, let us not deny it to him after death. In him, sir, I admire the sound philosopher, the rigid moralist, the upright statesman, the candid historian. . . . In Hampden I see the splendour of patriotic bravery obscured by the darkness of rebellion, and the faculties by which he might have been a real hero and real martyr, prostituted in the cause,' and so on, with all the promise of the *os magna sonaturum*, of which time was to prove the resources so inexhaustible. On one great man he passed a final judgment that years did not change: — 'Debate on Sir R. Walpole: Hallam, Gaskell, Pickering, and Doyle spoke. Voted for him. Last time, when I was almost entirely ignorant of the subject, against him. There were sundry considerable blots, but nothing to overbalance or to spoil the great merit of being the bulwark of the protestant succession, his commercial measures, and in general his pacific policy.'[1]

As for the *Eton Miscellany*, which was meant to follow earlier attempts in the same line, the best-natured critic cannot honestly count it dazzling. Such things rarely are; for youth, though the most adorable of our human stages, cannot yet have knowledge or practice enough, whether in life or books, to make either good prose or stirring verse, unless by a miracle of genius, and even that inspiration is but occasional. The *Microcosm* (1786–87) and the *Etonian* (1818), with such hands as Canning and Frere, Moultrie and Praed, were well enough. The newcomer was a long way behind these in the freshness, brilliance, daring,

[1] Feb. 10, 1827.

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by which only such juvenile performances can either please or interest. George Selwyn and Gladstone were joint editors, and each provided pretty copious effusions. 'I cannot keep my temper,' he wrote afterwards in his diary in 1835, on turning over the *Miscellany*, 'in perusing my own (with few exceptions) execrable productions.' Certainly his contributions have no particular promise or savour, no hint of the strong pinions into which the half-fledged wings were in time to expand. Their motion, such as it is, must be pronounced mechanical; their phrase and cadence conventional. Even when sincere feelings were deeply stirred, the flight cannot be called high. The most moving public event in his school-days was undoubtedly the death of Canning, and to Gladstone the stroke was almost personal. In September 1827 he tells his mother that he has for the first time visited Westminster Abbey,—his object, an eager pilgrimage to the newly tenanted grave of his hero, and in the *Miscellany* he pays a double tribute. In the prose we hear sonorous things about meridian splendour, premature extinction, and inscrutable wisdom; about falling, like his great master Pitt, a victim to his proud and exalted station; about being firm in principle and conciliatory in action, the friend of improvement and the enemy of innovation. Nor are the versified reflections in Westminster Abbey much more striking:—

> Oft in the sculptured aisle and swelling dome,
> The yawning grave hath given the proud a home;
> Yet never welcomed from his bright career
> A mightier victim than it welcomed here:
> Again the tomb may yawn — again may death
> Claim the last forfeit of departing breath;
> Yet ne'er enshrine in slumber dark and deep
> A nobler, loftier prey than where thine ashes sleep.

Excellent in feeling, to be sure; but as a trial of poetic delicacy or power, wanting the true note, and only worth recalling for an instant as we go.

III

As nearly always happens, it was less by school work or spoken addresses in juvenile debate, or early attempts in the great and difficult art of written composition, than by

blithe and congenial comradeship that the mind of the young Gladstone was stimulated, opened, strengthened. In after days he commemorated among his friends George Selwyn, afterwards bishop of New Zealand and of Lichfield, 'a man whose character is summed up, from alpha to omega, in the single word, noble, and whose high office, in a large measure, it was to reintroduce among the anglican clergy the pure heroic type.' Another was Francis Doyle, 'whose genial character supplied a most pleasant introduction for his unquestionable poetic genius.' A third was James Milnes Gaskell, a youth endowed with precocious ripeness of political faculty, an enthusiast, and with a vivacious humour that enthusiasts often miss. Doyle said of him that his nurse must have lulled him to sleep by parliamentary reports, and his first cries on awaking in his cradle must have been 'hear, hear'! Proximity of rooms 'gave occasion or aid to the formation of another very valuable friendship, that with Gerald Wellesley, afterwards dean of Windsor, which lasted, to my great profit, for some sixty years, until that light was put out.' In Gaskell's room four or five of them would meet, and discuss without restraint the questions of politics that were too modern to be tolerated in public debate. Most of them were friendly to catholic emancipation, and to the steps by which Huskisson, supported by Canning, was cautiously treading in the path towards free trade. The brightest star in this cheerful constellation was the rare youth who, though his shining course was run in two-and-twenty years, yet in that scanty span was able to impress with his vigorous understanding and graceful imagination more than one of the loftiest minds of his time.[1] Arthur Hallam was a couple of years younger than Gladstone, no narrow gulf at that age; but such was the sympathy of genius, such the affinities of intellectual interest and aspiration spoken and unspoken, such the charm and the power of the younger with the elder, that rapid instinct made them close comrades. They clubbed together their rolls and butter, and breakfasted in one

[1] Mr. Gladstone fixed on two of the elegies of *In Memoriam* as most directly conveying the image of Arthur Hallam, cviii. and cxxviii.

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another's rooms. Hallam was not strong enough for boating, so the more sinewy Gladstone used to scull him up to the Shallows, and he regarded this toilsome carrying of an idle passenger up stream as proof positive of no common value set upon his passenger's company. They took walks together, often to the monument of Gray, close by the churchyard of the elegy; arguing about the articles and the creeds; about Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley; about free will, for Hallam was precociously full of Jonathan Edwards; about politics, old and new, living and dead; about Pitt and Fox, and Canning and Peel, for Gladstone was a tory and Hallam pure whig. Hallam was described by Mr. Gladstone in his old age as one who 'enjoyed work, enjoyed society; and games which he did not enjoy he left contentedly aside. His temper was as sweet as his manners were winning. His conduct was without a spot or even a speck. He was that rare and blessed creature, *anima naturaliter Christiana*. He read largely, and though not superficial, yet with an extraordinary speed. He had no high or exclusive ways.' Thus, as so many have known in that happy dawn of life, before any of the imps of disorder and confusion have found their way into the garden, it was the most careless hours, — careless of all save truth and beauty, — that were the hours best filled.

Youth will commonly do anything rather than write letters, but the friendship of this pair stood even that test. The pages are redolent of a living taste for good books and serious thoughts, and amply redeemed from strain or affectation by touches of gay irony and the collegian's banter. Hallam applies to Gladstone Diomede's lines about Odysseus, of eager heart and spirit so manful in all manner of toils, as the only comrade whom a man would choose.[1] But the Greek hero was no doubt a complex character, and the parallel is taken by Gladstone as an equivocal compliment. So Hallam begs him at any rate to accept the other description, how when he uttered his mighty voice from his chest, and words fell like flakes of snow in winter, then could no mortal man contend with Odysseus.[2] As happy a forecast for the

[1] *Iliad*, iii. 221.

[2] *Ibid.* x. 242.

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great orator of their generation, as when in 1829 he told Gladstone that Tennyson promised fair to be its greatest poet. Hallam's share in the correspondence reminds us of the friendship of two other Etonians ninety years before, of the letters and verses that Gray wrote to Richard West; there is the same literary sensibility, the same kindness, but there is what Gray and West felt not, the breath of a busy and changing age. Each of these two had the advantage of coming from a home where politics were not mere gossip about persons and paragraphs, but were matters of trained and continued interest. The son of one of the most eminent of the brilliant band of the whig writers of that day, Hallam passes glowing eulogies on the patriotism and wisdom of the whigs in coalescing with Canning against the bigotry of the king and the blunders of Wellington and Peel; he contrasts this famous crisis with a similar crisis in the early part of the reign of George III.; and observes how much higher all parties stood in the balance of disinterestedness and public virtue. He goes to the opera and finds Zucchelli admirable, Coradori divine. He wonders (1826) about Sir Walter's forthcoming life of Napoleon, how with his ultra principles Scott will manage to make a hero of the Corsican. He asks if Gladstone has read 'the new *Vivian Grey*' (1827) — the second part of that amazing fiction into which an author, not much older than themselves and destined to strange historic relations with one of them, had the year before burst upon the world. Hallam is not without the graceful melancholy of youth, so different from that other melancholy of ripe years and the deepening twilight. Under all is the recurrent note of a grave refrain that fatal issues made pathetic.

'Never since the time when I first knew you,' Hallam wrote to Gladstone (June 23, 1830), 'have I ceased to love and respect your character. . . . It will be my proudest thought that I may henceforth act worthily of their affection who, like yourself, have influenced my mind for good in the earliest season of its development. Circumstance, my dear Gladstone, has indeed separated our paths, but it can never do away with what has been. The stamp of each of our minds is on the other. Many a habit of thought in each is

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modified, many a feeling is associated, which never would have existed in that combination, had it not been for the old familiar days when we lived together.'

In the summer of 1827 Hallam quitted Eton for the journey to Italy that set so important a mark on his literary growth, and he bade his friend farewell in words of characteristic affection. 'Perhaps you will pardon my doing by writing what I hardly dare trust myself to do by words. I received your superb Burke yesterday; and hope to find it a memorial of past and a pledge for future friendship through both our lives. It is perhaps rather bold in me to ask a favour immediately on acknowledging so great a one; but you would please me, and oblige me greatly, if you will accept this copy of my father's book. It may serve when I am separated from you, to remind you of one, whose warmest pleasure it will always be to subscribe himself, Your most faithful friend, A. H. H.'

A few entries from the schoolboy's diary may serve to bring the daily scene before us, and show what his life was like:—

*October* 3, 1826. — Holiday. Walk with Hallam. Wrote over theme. Read Clarendon. Wrote speech for Saturday week. Poor enough. Did punishment set by Keate to all the fifth form for being late in church.

*October* 6. — Fin. second Olympiad of Pindar. . . . Clarendon. Did an abstract of about 100 pages. Wrote speech for to-morrow in favour of Caesar.

*November* 13. — Play. Breakfast with Hallam. Read a little Clarendon. Read over tenth Satire of Juvenal and read the fifth, making quotations to it and some other places. Did a few verses.

*November* 14. — Holiday. Wrote over theme. Did verses. Walked with Hallam and Doyle. Read papers and debates. . . . Read 200 lines of *Trachiniae*. A little *Gil Blas* in French, and a little Clarendon.

*November* 18. — Play. Read papers, etc. Finished Blair's *Dissertation on Ossian*. Finished *Trachiniae*. Did 3 props. of Euclid. Question: Was deposition of Richard II. justifiable?

Voted no. Good debate. Finished the delightful oration *Pro Milone.*

*November* 21. — Holiday. . . . Part of article in *Edinburgh Review* on *Icon Basilike.* Read Herodotus, Clarendon. Did 3 props. Scrambling and leaping expedition with Hallam, Doyle, and Gaskell.

*November* 30. — Holiday. Read Herodotus. Breakfasted with Gaskell. He and Hallam drank wine with me after 4. Walked with Hallam. Did verses. Finished first book of Euclid. Read a little *Charles XII.*

*February* 27, 1827. — Holiday. Dressed (knee-breeches, etc.) and went into school with Selwyn. Found myself not at all in a funk, and went through my performance with tolerable comfort. Durnford followed me, then Selwyn, who spoke well. Horrors of speaking chiefly in the name.

*March* 20. — My father has lost his seat, and Berwick a representative ten times too good for it. Wrote to my father, no longer M.P.; when we have forgotten the manner, the matter is not so bad.

*March* 24. — Half-holiday. Play and learning it. Walked with Hallam, read papers. Hallam drank wine with me after dinner. Finished 8th vol. of Gibbon; read account of Palmyra in second volume; did more verses on it. Much jaw about nothing at Society, and absurd violence.

*May* 31. — Finished iambics. Wrote over for tutor. Played cricket in the Upper Club, and had tea in poet's walk [an entry repeated this summer].

*June* 26. — Wrote over theme. Read *Iphigenie.* Called up in Homer. Sculled Hallam to Surly after 6. Went to see a cricket match after 4.

Gladstone's farewell to Eton came with Christmas (1827). He writes to his sister his last Etonian letter (December 2) before departure, and 'melancholy that departure is.' On the day before, he had made his valedictory speech to the Society, and the empty shelves and dismantled walls, the table strewn with papers, the books packed away in their boxes, have the effect of 'mingling in one lengthened mass all the boyish hopes and solicitudes and pleasures' of his

BOOK I. 1821–27.

Eton life. 'I have long ago made up my mind that I have of late been enjoying what will in all probability be, as far as my own individual case is concerned, the happiest years of my life. And they have fled! From these few facts do we not draw a train of reflections awfully important in their nature and extremely powerful in their impression on the mind?'

Two reminiscences of Eton always gave him, and those who listened to him, much diversion whenever chance brought them to his mind, and he has set them down in an autobiographic fragment, for which this is the place: —

To Dr. Keate nature had accorded a stature of only about five feet, or say five feet one; but by costume, voice, manner (including a little swagger), and character he made himself in every way the capital figure on the Eton stage, and his departure marked, I imagine, the departure of the old race of English public school masters, as the name of Dr. Busby seems to mark its introduction. In connection with his name I shall give two anecdotes separated by a considerable interval of years. About the year 1820, the eloquence of Dr. Edward Irving drew crowds to his church in London, which was presbyterian. It required careful previous arrangements to secure comfortable accommodation. The preacher was solemn, majestic (notwithstanding the squint), and impressive; carrying all the appearance of devoted earnestness. My father had on a certain occasion, when I was still a small Eton boy, taken time by the forelock, and secured the use of a convenient pew in the first rank of the gallery. From this elevated situation we surveyed at ease and leisure the struggling crowds below. The crush was everywhere great, but greatest of all in the centre aisle. Here the mass of human beings, mercilessly compressed, swayed continually backwards and forwards. There was I, looking down with infinite complacency and satisfaction from this honourable vantage ground upon the floor of the church, filled and packed as one of our public meetings is, with people standing and pushing. What was my emotion, my joy, my exultation, when I espied among this humiliated mass, struggling and buffeted — whom but Keate! Keate the master of our existence, the tyrant of our days! Pure, unalloyed,

unadulterated rapture! Such a περιπέτεια, such a reversal of human conditions of being, as that now exhibited between the Eton lower boy uplifted to the luxurious gallery pew, and the head-master of Eton, whom I was accustomed to see in the roomy deck of the upper school with vacant space and terror all around him, it must be hard for any one to conceive, except the two who were the subjects of it. Never, never, have I forgotten that moment.[1]

I will now, after the manner of novelists, ask my reader to effect along with me, a transition of some eighteen years, and to witness another, and if not a more complete yet a worthier, turning of the tables. In the year 1841 there was a very special Eton dinner held in Willis's Rooms to commemorate the fourth centenary of the ancient school. Lord Morpeth, afterwards Lord Carlisle, was in the chair. On his right, not far off him, was Dr. Keate, to whom I chanced to have a seat almost immediately opposite. In those days, at public dinners, cheering was marked by gradations. As the Queen was suspected of sympathy with the liberal government of Lord Melbourne which advised her, the toast of the sovereign was naturally received with a moderate amount of acclamation, decently and thriftily doled out. On the other hand the Queen Dowager either was, or was believed to be, conservative; and her health consequently figured as the toast of the evening, and drew forth, as a matter of course, by far its loudest acclamation. So much was routine; and we went through it as usual. But the real toast of the evening was yet to come. I suppose it to be beyond doubt that of the assembled company the vastly preponderating majority had been under his sway at Eton; and if, when in that condition, any one of them had been asked how he liked Dr. Keate, he would beyond question have answered, 'Keate? Oh, I hate him.' It is equally beyond doubt that to the persons of the whole of them, with the rarest exceptions, it had been the case of Dr. Keate to administer the salutary correction of the birch. But upon this occasion, when his name had been announced the scene was indescribable. Queen and Queen Dowager alike vanished into insignificance. The roar of cheering

[1] I have heard him tell this story, and Garrick himself could not have reproduced a schoolboy's glee with more admirable accent and gesture.

BOOK I. 1821–27.

had a beginning, but never knew satiety or end. Like the huge waves at Biarritz, the floods of cheering continually recommenced; the whole process was such that we seemed all to have lost our self-possession and to be hardly able to keep our seats. When at length it became possible Keate rose: that is to say, his head was projected slightly over the heads of his two neighbours. He struggled to speak; I will not say I heard every syllable, for there were no syllables; speak he could not. He tried in vain to mumble a word or two, but wholly failed, recommenced the vain struggle and sat down. It was certainly one of the most moving spectacles that in my whole life I have witnessed.

IV

Some months passed between leaving Eton and going to Oxford. In January 1828, Gladstone went to reside with Dr. Turner at Wilmslow in Cheshire, and remained there until Turner was made Bishop of Calcutta. The bishop's pupil afterwards testified to his amiability, refinement, and devoutness; but the days of his energy were past, and 'the religious condition of the parish was depressing.' Among the neighbouring families, with whom he made acquaintance while at Wilmslow, were the Gregs of Quarry Bank, a refined and philanthropic household, including among the sons William R. Greg (born in the same year as Mr. Gladstone), that ingenious, urbane, interesting, and independent mind, whose speculations, dissolvent and other, were afterwards to take an effective place in the writings of the time. 'I fear he is a unitarian,' the young churchman mentions to his father, and gives sundry reasons for that sombre apprehension; it was, indeed, only too well founded.

While at Wilmslow (Feb. 5, 1828) Gladstone was taken to dine with the rector of Alderley — 'an extremely gentlemanly and said to be a very clever man,' — afterwards to be known as the liberal and enlightened Edward Stanley, Bishop of Norwich, and father of Arthur Stanley, the famous dean. Him, on this occasion, the young Gladstone seems to have seen for the first time. Arthur Stanley was six years his junior, and there was then some idea of sending him to Eton. As it happened, he too was a pupil at

Rawson's at Seaforth, and in the summer after the meeting at Alderley the two lads met again. The younger of them has described how he was invited to breakfast with William Gladstone at Seaforth House; in what grand style they breakfasted, how he devoured strawberries, swam the Newfoundland dog in the pond, looked at books and pictures, and talked to W. Gladstone 'almost all the time about all sorts of things. He is so very good-natured, and I like him very much. He talked a great deal about Eton, and said that it was a very good place for those who liked boating and Latin verses. He was very good-natured to us all the time, and lent me books to read when we went away.'[1] A few months later, as all the world knows, Stanley, happily for himself and for all of us, went not to Eton but to Rugby, where Arnold had just entered on his bold and noble task of changing the face of education in England.

[1] Prothero's *Life of Dean Stanley*, i. p. 22.

## CHAPTER III

### OXFORD

*(October 1828–December 1831)*

> Steeped in sentiment as she lies, spreading her gardens to the moonlight, and whispering from her towers the last enchantments of the Middle Age, who will deny that Oxford, by her ineffable charm, keeps ever calling us nearer to the true goal of all of us, to the ideal, to perfection — to beauty, in a word, which is only truth seen from another side? — M. Arnold.

BOOK I. 1828.

Glorious to most are the days of life in a great school, but it is at college that aspiring talent first enters on its inheritance. Oxford was slowly awakening from a long age of lethargy. Toryism of a stolid clownish type still held the thrones of collegiate power. Yet the eye of an imaginative scholar as he gazed upon the grey walls, reared by piety, munificence, and love of learning in a far-off time, might well discern behind an unattractive screen of academic sloth, the venerable past, not dim and cold, but in its traditions rich, nourishing, and alive. Such an one could see before him present days of honourable emulation and stirring acquisition — fit prelude of a man's part to play in a strenuous future. It is from Gladstone's introduction into this enchanted and inspiring world, that we recognise the beginning of the wonderful course that was to show how great a thing the life of a man may be made.

The Eton boy became the Christ Church man, and there began residence, October 10, 1828. Mr. Gladstone's rooms, during most of his undergraduate life, were on the right hand, and on the first floor of the staircase on the right, as one enters by the Canterbury gate. He tells his mother that they are in a very fashionable part of the college, and mentions as a delightful fact, that Gaskell and

Seymer have rooms on the same floor. Samuel Smith was head until 1831, when he was succeeded by the more celebrated Dr. Gaisford, always described by Mr. Gladstone as a splendid scholar, but a bad dean. Gaisford's excellent services to the Greek learning of his day are unquestioned, and he had the signal merit of speech, Spartan brevity. For a short time in 1806 he had been tutor to Peel. When Lord Liverpool offered him the Greek professorship, with profuse compliments on his erudition, the learned man replied, 'My Lord, I have received your letter, and accede to the contents. — Yours, T. G.' And to the complaining parent of an undergraduate he wrote, 'Dear Sir, — Such letters as yours are a great annoyance to your obedient servant T. Gaisford.'[1] This laconic gift the dean evidently had not time to transmit to all of his flock.

Christ Church in those days was infested with some rowdyism, and in one bear-fight an undergraduate was actually killed. In the chapel the new undergraduate found little satisfaction, for the service was scarcely performed with common decency. There seems, however, to have been no irreconcilable prejudice against reading, and in the schools the college was at the top of its academic fame. The influence of Cyril Jackson, the dean in Peel's time, whose advice to Peel and other pupils to work like a tiger, and not to be afraid of killing one's self by work, was still operative.[2] At the summer examination of 1830, Christ Church won five first classes out of ten. Most commoners, according to a letter of Gaskell's, had from three hundred and fifty to five hundred pounds a year ; but gentlemen commoners like Acland and Gaskell had from five to six hundred. At the end of 1829, Mr. Gladstone received a studentship *honoris causa*, by nomination of the dean — a system that would not be approved in our epoch of

[1] Charles Wordsworth's *Annals*.

[2] After Peel had begun his career, Jackson gave him a piece of advice that would have pleased Mr. Gladstone : — 'Let no day pass without your having Homer in your hand. Elevate your own mind by continual meditation on the vastness of his comprehension and the unerring accuracy of all his conceptions. If you will but read him four or five times over every year, in half a dozen years you will know him by heart, and he well deserves it.' — Parker's *Life of Sir R. Peel*, i. p. 28.

BOOK I. 1828.

competitive examination, but still an advance upon the time-honoured practice of deans and canons disposing of studentships on grounds of private partiality without reference to desert. We may assume that the dean was not indifferent to academic promise when he told Gladstone, very good-naturedly and civilly, that he had determined to offer him his nomination. The student designate wrote a theme, read it out before the chapter, passed a nominal, or even farcical, examination in Homer and Virgil, was elected as matter of course by the chapter, and after chapel on the morning of Christmas eve, having taken several oaths, was formally admitted in the name of the Holy Trinity.

Mr. Biscoe, his classical tutor, was a successful lecturer on Aristotle, especially on the Rhetoric. With Charles Wordsworth, son of the master of Trinity at Cambridge, and afterwards Bishop of Saint Andrews, he read for scholarship, apparently not wholly to his own satisfaction. While still an undergraduate, he writes to his father (Nov. 2, 1830), 'I am wretchedly deficient in the knowledge of modern languages, literature, and history; and the classical knowledge acquired here, though sound, accurate, and useful, yet is not such as to *complete* an education.' It looked, in truth, as if the caustic saying of a brilliant colleague of his in later years were not at the time unjust, as now it would happily be, that it was a battle between Eton and education, and Eton had won.

Mr. Gladstone never to the end of his days ceased to be grateful that Oxford was chosen for his university. At Cambridge, as he said in discussing Hallam's choice, the pure refinements of scholarship were more in fashion than the study of the great masterpieces of antiquity in their substance and spirit. The classical examination at Oxford, on the other hand, was divided into the three elastic departments of scholarship and poetry, history, and philosophy. In this list, history somewhat outweighed the scholarship, and philosophy was somewhat more regarded than history. In each case the examination turned more on contents than on form, and the influence of Butler was at its climax.

If Mr. Gladstone had gone to Oxford ten years earlier, he would have found the Ethics and the Rhetoric treated, only much less effectively, in the Cambridge method, like dramatists and orators, as pieces of literature. As it was, Whately's common sense had set a new fashion, and Aristotle was studied as the master of those who know how to teach us the right way about the real world.[1] Aristotle, Butler, and logic were the new acquisitions, but in none of the three as yet did the teaching go deep compared with modern standards. Oxford scholars of our own day question whether there was even one single tutor in 1830, with the possible exception of Hampden, who could expound Aristotle as a whole — so utterly had the Oxford tradition perished.[2]

The time was in truth the eve of an epoch of illumination, and in these epochs it is not old academic systems that the new light is wont to strike with its first rays. The summer of 1831 is the date of Sir William Hamilton's memorable exposure,[3] in his most trenchant and terrifying style and with a learning all his own, of the corruption and 'vampire oppression of Oxford'; its sacrifice of the public interests to private advantage; its unhallowed disregard of every moral and religious bond; the systematic perjury so naturalised in a great seminary of religious education; the apathy with which the injustice was tolerated by the state and the impiety tolerated by the church. Copleston made a wretched reply, but more than twenty years passed before the spirit of reform overthrew the entrenchments of academic abuse. In that overthrow, when the time came, Mr. Gladstone was called to play a part, though hardly at first a very zealous one. This was not for a quarter of a century; for, as we shall soon see, both the revival of learning and the reform of institutions at Oxford were sharply turned aside from their expected course by the startling theological movement that now proceeded from her venerable walls.

What interests us here is not the system but the man; and never was vital temperament more admirably fitted

[1] On the four periods of Aristotelian study at Oxford in the first half of the century see Pattison's Essays, i. p. 463.

[2] *Ibid.* i. p. 465.

[3] Reprinted from the *Edinburgh Review* in *Discussions on Philosophy and Literature*, pp. 401–559. (1852.)

BOOK I. 1829.

by its vigour, sincerity, conscience, compass, for whatever good seed from the hand of any sower might be cast upon it. In an entry in his diary in the usual strain of evangelical devotion (April 25, 1830) is a sentence that reveals what was in Mr. Gladstone the nourishing principle of growth: 'In practice the great end is that the love of God may become the *habit* of my soul, and particularly these things are to be sought: — 1. The spirit of love. 2. Of self-sacrifice. 3. Of purity. 4. Of energy.' Just as truly as if we were recalling some hero of the seventeenth or any earlier century, is this the biographic clue.

Gladstone constantly reproaches himself for natural indolence, and for a year and a half he took his college course pretty easily. Then he changed. 'The time for half-measures and trifling and pottering, in which I have so long indulged myself, is now gone by, and I must do or die.' His really hard work did not begin until the summer of 1830, when he returned to Cuddesdon to read mathematics with Saunders, a man who had the reputation of being singularly able and stimulating to his pupils, and with whom he had done some rudiments before going into residence at Christ Church. In his description of this gentleman to his father, we may hear for the first time the redundant roll that was for many long years to be so familiar and so famous. Saunders' disposition, it appears, 'is one certainly of extreme benevolence, and of a benevolence which is by no means less strong and full when purely gratuitous and spontaneous, than when he seems to be under the tie of some definite and positive obligation.' Dr. Gaisford would perhaps have put it that the tutor was no kinder where his kindness was paid for, than where it was not.

The catholic question, that was helping many another and older thing to divide England from Ireland, after having for a whole generation played havoc with the fortunes of party and the careers of statesmen, was now drawing swiftly to its close. The Christ Church student had a glimpse of one of the opening scenes of the last act. He writes to his brother (Feb. 6th, 1829): —

CHAP. III.

ÆT. 20.

I saw yesterday a most interesting scene in the Convocation house. The occasion was the debate on the anti-catholic petition, which it has long been the practice of the university to send up year by year. This time it was worded in the most gentle and moderate terms possible. All the ordinary business there, is transacted in Latin; I mean such things as putting the question, speaking, etc., and this rule, I assure you, stops many a mouth, and I dare say saves the Roman catholics many a hard word. There were rather above two hundred doctors and masters of arts present. Three speeches were made, two against and one in favour of sending up the petition. Instead of aye and no they had *placet* and *non-placet*, and in place of a member dividing the House, the question was, "*Petitne aliquis scrutinium?*" which was answered by "*Peto!*" "*Peto!*" from many quarters. However, when the scrutiny took place, it was found that the petition was carried by 156 to 48. . . . After the division, however, came the most interesting part of the whole. A letter from Peel, resigning the seat for the university, was read before the assembly. It was addressed to the vice-chancellor and had arrived just before, it was understood; and I suppose brought hither the first positive and indubitable announcement of the government's intention to emancipate the catholics.

A few days later, Peel accepted the Chiltern Hundreds, and after some deliberation allowed himself to be again brought forward for re-election. He was beaten by 755 votes to 609. The relics of the contest, the figures and the inscriptions on the walls, soon disappeared, but panic did not abate. On Gladstone's way to Oxford (April 30, 1829), a farmer's wife got into the coach, and in communicative vein informed him how frightened they had all been about catholic emancipation, but she did not see that so much had come of it as yet. The college scout declared himself much troubled for the king's conscience, observing that if we make an oath at baptism, we ought to hold by it. 'The bed-makers,' Gladstone writes home, 'seem to continue in a great fright, and mine was asking me this morning whether it would not be a very good thing if we were to give them [the Irish] a king and a parliament of their own, and so to have

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no more to do with them. The old egg-woman is no whit easier, and wonders how Mr. Peel, who was always such a well-behaved man here, can be so foolish as to think of letting in the Roman catholics.' The unthinking and the ignorant of all classes were much alike. Arthur Hallam went to see *King John* in 1827, and he tells his friend how the lines about the Italian priest (Act III. Sc. 1) provoked rounds of clapping, while a gentleman in the next box cried out at the top of his voice, 'Bravo! Bravo! No Pope!' The same correspondent told Gladstone of the father of a common Eton friend, who had challenged him with the overwhelming question, 'Could I say that any papist had ever at any time done any good to the world?' A still stormier conflict than even the emancipation of the catholics was now to shake Oxford and the country to the depths, before Mr. Gladstone took his degree.

II

His friendships at Oxford Mr. Gladstone did not consider to have been as a rule very intimate. Principal among them were Frederick Rogers, long afterwards Lord Blachford; Doyle; Gaskell; Bruce, afterwards Lord Elgin; Charles Canning, afterwards Lord Canning; the two Denisons; Lord Lincoln. These had all been his friends at Eton. Among new acquisitions to the circle of his intimates at one time or another of his Oxford life, were the two Aclands, Thomas and Arthur; Hamilton, afterwards Bishop of Salisbury; Phillimore, destined to close and life-long friendship; F. D. Maurice, then of Exeter College, a name destined to stir so many minds in the coming generation. Of Maurice, Arthur Hallam had written to Gladstone (June 1830) exhorting him to cultivate his acquaintance. 'I know many,' says Hallam, 'whom Maurice has moulded like a second nature, and these too, men eminent for intellectual power, to whom the presence of a commanding spirit would in all other cases be a signal rather for rivalry than reverential acknowledgment.' 'I knew Maurice well,' says Mr. Gladstone in one of his notes of reminiscence, 'had heard superlative accounts of him from Cambridge, and really strove hard to make them

all realities to myself. One Sunday morning we walked to Marsh Baldon to hear Mr. Porter, the incumbent, a calvinist independent of the *clique*, and a man of remarkable power as we both thought. I think he and other friends did me good, but I got little solid meat from him, as I found him difficult to catch and still more difficult to hold.'

Sidney Herbert, afterwards so dear to him, now at Oriel, here first became an acquaintance. Manning, though they both read with the same tutor, and one succeeded the other as president of the Union, he did not at this time know well. The lists of his guests at wines and breakfasts do not even contain the name of James Hope; indeed, Mr. Gladstone tells us that he certainly was not more than an acquaintance. In the account of intimates is the unexpected name of Tupper, who, in days to come, acquired for a time a grander reputation than he deserved by his *Proverbial Philosophy*, and on whom the public by and by avenged its own foolishness by severer doses of mockery than he had earned.[1] The friend who seems most to have affected him in the deepest things was Anstice, whom he describes to his father (June 4, 1830) as 'a very clever man, and more than a clever man, a man of excellent principle and of perfect self-command, and of great industry. If any circumstances could confer upon me the inestimable blessing of fixed habits and unremitting industry, these [the example of such a man] will be they.' The diary tells how, in August (1830), Mr. Gladstone conversed with Anstice in a walk from Oxford to Cuddesdon on subjects of the highest importance. 'Thoughts then first sprang up in my soul (obvious as they may appear to many) which may powerfully influence my destiny. O for a light from on high! I have no power, none, to discern the right path for myself.' They afterwards had long talks together, 'about that awful subject which has lately almost engrossed my mind.' Another day — 'Conversation of an hour and a half with Anstice on practical religion, particularly as regards our own situation. I bless and

[1] Tupper (*My Life*, etc., p. 53, 1886) mentions that he beat Mr. Gladstone for the Burton theological essay, 'The Reconciliation of Matthew and John'; but Gladstone was so good a second that Dr. Burton begged that one-fifth of the prize money might be given to him as solatium.

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praise God for his presence here.' 'Long talk with Anstice; would I were more worthy to be his companion.' 'Conversation with Anstice; he talked much with Saunders on the motive of actions, contending for the love of God, *not* selfishness even in its most refined form.' [1]

In the matter of his own school of religion, Mr. Gladstone was always certain that Oxford in his undergraduate days had no part in turning him from an evangelical into a high churchman. The tone and dialect of his diary and letters at the time show how just this impression was. We find him in 1830 expressing his satisfaction that a number of Hannah More's tracts have been put on the list of the Christian Knowledge Society. In 1831 he bitterly deplores such ecclesiastical appointments as those of Sydney Smith and Dr. Maltby, 'both of them, I believe, regular latitudinarians.' He remembered his shock at Butler's laudation of Nature. He was scandalised by a sermon in which Calvin was placed upon the same level among heresiarchs as Socinus and other like aliens from gospel truth. He was delighted (March 1830) with a university sermon against Milman's *History of the Jews*, and hopes it may be useful as an antidote, 'for Milman, though I do think without intentions directly evil, does go far enough to be justly called a bane. For instance, he says that had Moses never existed, the Hebrew nation would have remained a degraded pariah tribe or been lost in the mass of the Egyptian population —and this notwithstanding the promise.' In all his letters in the period from Eton to the end of Oxford and later, a language noble and exalted even in these youthful days is not seldom copiously streaked with a vein that, to eyes not trained to evangelical light and to minds not tolerant of the expansion that comes to religious natures in the days of adolescence, may seem unpleasantly strained and excessive. The fashion of such words undergoes transfiguration as the epochs pass. Yet in all their fashions, even the crudest, they deserve much tenderness. He consults a clergyman (1829) on the practice of prayer meetings in his

[1] Anstice was afterwards professor of Classics at King's College, and was cut off prematurely at the age of thirty. See below, p. 134.

rooms. His correspondent answers, that as the wicked have their orgies and meet to gamble and to drink, so they that fear the Lord should speak often to one another concerning Him; that prayer meetings are not for the cultivation or exhibition of gifts, nor to enable noisy and forward young men to pose as leaders of a school of prophets; but if a few young men of like tastes feel the withering influence of mere scholastic learning, and the necessity of mutual stimulation and refreshment, then such prayer meetings would be a safe and natural remedy. The student's attention to all religious observances was close and unbroken, the most living part of his existence.

The movement that was to convulse the church had not yet begun. 'You may smile,' Mr. Gladstone said long after, 'when told that when I was at Oxford, Dr. Hampden was regarded as a model of orthodoxy; that Dr. Newman was eyed with suspicion as a low churchman, and Dr. Pusey as leaning to rationalism.' What Mr. Gladstone afterwards described as a steady, clear, but dry anglican orthodoxy bore sway, 'and frowned this way or that, on the first indication of any tendency to diverge from the beaten path.'[1] He hears Whately preach a controversial sermon (1831) just after he had been made Archbishop of Dublin. 'Doubtless he is a man of much power and many excellences, but his anti-sabbatical doctrine is, I fear, as mischievous as it is unsound.' A sermon of Keble's at St. Mary's prompts the uneasy question, 'Are all Mr. Keble's opinions those of scripture and the church? Of his life and heart and practice, none could doubt, all would admire.' A good sermon is mentioned from Blanco White, that strange and forlorn figure of whom in later life Mr. Gladstone wrote an interesting account, not conclusive in argument, but assuredly not wanting in either delicacy or generosity.[2] 'Dr. Pusey was very kind to me when I was an undergraduate at Oxford,' he says, but what their relations were I know not. 'I knew and respected both Bishop Lloyd and Dr. Pusey,' he says, 'but neither of them attempted to exercise the smallest influence over my religious opinions.' With Newman he seems to have been

[1] *Gleanings*, vii. p. 141.

[2] *Ibid.* ii. p. 1.

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brought into contact hardly at all.[1] Newman and one of the Wilberforces came to dine at Cuddesdon one day, and, on a later occasion, he and another fellow of Oriel were at a dinner with Mr. Gladstone at the table of his friend Philip Pusey. Two or three of his sermons are mentioned. One of them (March 7, 1831) contained 'much singular, not to say objectionable matter, if one may so speak of so good a man.' Of another, — 'heard Newman preach a good sermon on those who made excuse' (Sept. 25, 1831). Of the generality of university sermons, he accepted the observation of his friend Anstice, — 'Depend upon it, such sermons as those can never convert a single person.' On some Sundays he hears two of these discourses in the morning and afternoon, and a third sermon in the evening, for though he became the most copious of all speakers, Mr. Gladstone was ever the most generous of listeners. It was at St. Ebb's that he found really congenial ministrations — an ecclesiastical centre described by him fifty years later — under Mr. Bulteel, a man of some note in his day; here the flame was at white heat, and a score or two of young men felt its attractions.[2] He always remembered among the wonderful sights of his life, St. Mary's 'crammed in all parts by all orders, when Mr. Bulteel, an outlying calvinist, preached his accusatory sermon (some of it too true) against the university.' In the summer of 1830, Mr. Gladstone notes, 'Poor Bulteel has lost his church for preaching in the open air. Pity that he should have acted so, and pity that it should be found necessary to make such an example of a man of God.' The preacher was impenitent, for from a window Mr. Gladstone again heard him conduct a service for a large congregation who listened attentively to a sermon that was interesting, but evinced some soreness of spirit. A 'most painful' discourse from a Mr. Crowther so moves Mr. Gladstone that he sits down to write to the preacher, 'earnestly expostulating with him on the character and the doctrines of the sermon,' and after re-writing his letter, he

[1] Purcell (*Manning*, i. p. 46) makes Mr. Gladstone say, 'I was intimate with Newman, but then we had many friends in common.' This must be erroneously reported.

[2] *Gleanings*, vii. p. 211.

delivers it with his own hand at the door of the displeasing divine. The effect was not other than salutary, for a little later he was 'happy to hear two sermons of good principles from Mr. Crowther.' To his father, October 27, 1830: — 'Dr. Chalmers has been passing through Oxford, and I went to hear him preach on Sunday evening, though it was at the baptist chapel. . . . I need hardly say that his sermon was admirable, and quite as remarkable for the judicious and sober manner in which he enforced his views, as for their lofty principles and piety. He preached, I think, for an hour and forty minutes.' The admiration thus first aroused only grew with fuller knowledge in the coming years.

An Essay Club, called from its founder's initials the W E G, was formed at a meeting in Gaskell's rooms in October, 1829. Only two members out of the first twelve did not belong to Christ Church, Rogers of Oriel and Moncreiff of New.[1] The Essay Club's transactions, though not very serious, deserve a glance. Mr. Gladstone reads an essay (Feb. 20, 1830) on the comparative rank of poetry and philosophy, concluding with a motion that the rank of philosophy is higher than that of poetry: it was beaten by seven to five. Without a division, they determined that English poetry is of a higher order than Greek. The truth of the principles of phrenology was affirmed with the tremendous emphasis of eleven to one. Though trifling in degree, the influence of the modern drama was pronounced in quality pernicious. Gladstone gave his casting vote against the capacious proposition, of which philosophers had made so much in France, Switzerland, and other places on the eve of the French revolution, that education and other outward circumstances have more than nature to do with man's disposition. By four to three, Mr. Tennyson's poems were affirmed to show considerable genius, Gladstone happily in the too slender majority. The motion that 'political

[1] Sir Thomas Acland gives the names of the first twelve members as follows: Gladstone, Gaskell, Doyle, Moncreiff, Seymer, Rogers, two Aclands, Leader, Anstice, Harrison, Cole. Mr. Gladstone in a letter to Acland (1889) mentions these twelve names, and adds 'from the old book of record,' Bruce, J., Bruce, F., Egerton, Liddell, Lincoln, Lushington, Maurice, Oxenham, Vaughan, Thornton, C. Marriott.

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liberty is not to be considered as the end of government' was a great affair. Maurice, who had been admitted to the club on coming to Oxford from Cambridge, moved an amendment 'that every man has a right to perform certain personal duties with which no system of government has a right to interfere.' Gladstone 'objected to an observation that had fallen from the mover, "A man finds himself in the world," as if he did not come into the world under a debt to his parents, under obligations to society.' The tame motion of Lord Abercorn, that Elizabeth's conduct to Mary Queen of Scots was unjustifiable and impolitic, was stiffened into 'not only unjustifiable and impolitic, but a base and treacherous murder,' and in that severe form was carried without a division.

Plenty of nonsense was talked we may be sure, and so there was, no doubt, in the Olive Grove of Academe or amid those surnamed Peripatetics and the Sect Epicurean. Yet nonsense notwithstanding, the Essay Club had members who proved in time to have superior minds if ever men had, and their disputations in one another's rooms helped to sharpen their mental apparatus, to start trains of ideas however immature, and to shake the cherished dogmatisms brought from beloved homes, even if dogmatism as stringent took their place. This is how the world moves, and Oxford was just beginning to rub its eyes, awaking to the speculations of a new time.

When he looked back in after times, Mr. Gladstone traced one great defect in the education of Oxford. 'Perhaps it was my own fault, but I must admit that I did not learn when I was at Oxford that which I have learned since — namely, to set a due value on the imperishable and inestimable principle of British liberty. The temper which too much prevailed in academical circles was that liberty was regarded with jealousy and fear, something which could not wholly be dispensed with, but which was to be continually watched for fear of excesses.'[1]

[1] At Palmerston Club, Oxford, Jan. 30, 1878.

III

CHAP. III. Æt. 21.

In March 1830 Gladstone made the first of two attempts to win the scholarship newly founded by Dean Ireland, and from the beginning one of the most coveted of university prizes. In 1830 (March 16) he wrote:—'There is it appears smaller chance than ever of its falling out of the hands of the Shrewsbury people. There is a very formidable one indeed, by name Scott, come up from Christ Church. If it is to go among them I hope he may get it.' This was Robert Scott, afterwards master of Balliol, and then dean of Rochester, and the coadjutor with Dean Liddell in the famous Greek Lexicon brought out in 1843. A year later he tried again, but little better success came either to himself or to Scott. He tells his father the story (March 16th, 1831) and collegians who have fought such battles may care to hear it: —

I must first tell you that I am *not* the successful candidate, and after this I shall have nothing to communicate but what will, I think, give you pleasure. The scholarship has been won by (I believe) a native of Liverpool.[1] His name is Brancker, and he is now actually at Shrewsbury, but had matriculated here though he had not come up to reside. This result has excited immense surprise. For my own part, I went into the examination *solely* depending for any hope of pre-eminence above the Shrewsbury men on three points, Greek history, one particular kind of Greek verses, and Greek philosophy. . . . It so fell out, however, that not one of these three points was brought to bear on the examination, though, indeed, it is but a lame one without them. Accordingly from the turn it seemed to take as it proceeded, my own expectations regularly declined, and I thought I might consider myself very well off if I came in pretty high. As it is, I am even with the great competitor, Scott, whom everybody almost thought the favourite candidate, and above the others. Allies, an Eton man, Scott and I are placed together; and Short, one of the examiners, told us this morning that it was an extremely near thing, and he had great difficulty in making up his mind, which he never had felt in any former examination in

[1] His father was a Liverpool merchant, and had been mayor.

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which he had been engaged; and indeed he laid the preference given to Brancker chiefly on his having written short and concise answers, while ours were longwinded. And in consideration of its having been so closely contested, the vice-chancellor is to present each of us with a set of books. . . . Something however may fairly enough be attributed to the fact that at Eton we were not educated for such objects as these. . . . The result will affect the scholarship itself more than any individual character; for previous events have created, and this has contributed amazingly to strengthen, a prevalent impression that the Shrewsbury system is radically a false one, and that its object is not to educate the mind but merely to cram and stuff it for these purposes. However, we who are beaten are not fair judges. . . . I only trust that you will not be more annoyed than I am by this event.

Brancker was said to have won because he answered all the questions not only shortly, but most of them right, and Mr. Gladstone's essay was marked 'desultory beyond belief.' Below Allies came Sidney Herbert, then at Oriel, and Grove, afterwards a judge and an important name in the history of scientific speculation.

He was equally unsuccessful in another field of competition. He sent in a poem on Richard Cœur de Lion for the Newdigate prize in 1829. In 1893 somebody asked his leave to reprint it, and at Mr. Gladstone's request sent him a copy:—

On perusing it I was very much struck by the contrast it exhibited between the faculty of versification which (I thought) was good, and the faculty of poetry, which was very defective. This faculty of verse had been trained I suppose by verse-making at Eton, and was based upon the possession of a good or tolerable ear with which nature had endowed me. I think that a poetical faculty did develop itself in me a little later, that is to say between twenty and thirty, due perhaps to having read Dante with a real devotion and absorption. It was, however, in my view, true but weak, and has never got beyond that stage. It was evidently absent from the verses, I will not say the poem, on

Cœur de Lion; and without hesitation I declined to allow any reprint.[1] CHAP. III.

He was active in the debates at the Union, where he made his first start in the speaking line (Feb. 1830) in a strong oration much admired by his friends, in favour,—of all the questionable things in the world,—of the Treason and Sedition Acts of 1795. He writes home that he did not find the ordeal so formidable as it used to be before the smaller audiences at Eton, for at Oxford they sometimes mustered as many as a hundred or a hundred and fifty. He spoke for a strongly-worded motion on a happier theme, in favour of the policy and memory of Canning. In the summer of 1831, he mentions a debate in which a motion was proposed in favour of speedy emancipation of the West Indian slaves. 'I moved an amendment that education of a religious kind was the fit object of legislation, which was carried by thirty- ÆT. 21.

[1] By the kindness of the present dean of Christ Church I am able to give the reader a couple of specimens of Mr. Gladstone's Latin verse. The two pieces were written for 'Lent verses':—

(1829) Gladstone. *An aliquid sit immutabile? Affirmatur.*

Vivimus incertum? Fortunæ lusus habemur?
Singula præteriens det rapiatve dies?
En nemus exanimum, qua se modo germina, verno
Tempore, purpureis explicuere comis.
Respice pacatum Neptuni numine pontum:
Territa mox tumido verberat astra salo.
Sed brevior brevibus, quas unda supervenit, undis
Sed gelidâ, quam mox dissipat aura, nive:
Sed foliis sylvarum, et amici veris odore,
Quisquis honos placeat, quisquis alatur amor.
Jamne joci lususque sonant? viget alma Juventus?
Funereæ forsan cras cecinere tubæ.
Nec pietas, nec casta Fides, nec libera Virtus,
Nigrantes vetuit mortis inire domos.
Certa tamen lex ipsa manet, labentibus annis,
Quæ jubet assiduas quæque subire vices.

(1830) Gladstone. *An malum a seipso possit sanari? Affirmatur.*

Cernis ut argutas effuderit Anna querelas?
Lumen ut insolitâ triste tumescat aquâ?
Quicquid in ardenti flammarum corde rotatur,
Et fronte et rubris pingitur omne genis.
Dum ruit hùc illùc, speculum simulacra ruentis,
Ora Mimalloneo plena furore, refert.
Pectora vesano cùm turgida conspicit æstu,
Quæ fuit (haud qualis debeat esse) videt.
Ac veluti ventis intra sua claustra coactis,
Quum piget Æolium fræna dedisse ducem;
Concita non aliter subsidit pectoris unda,
Et propriâ rursum sede potitur Amor,
Jurâsses torvam perculso astare Medusam
Jurares Paphiæ lumen adesse deæ.

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three to twelve.' Of the most notable of all his successes at the Union we shall soon hear.

His little diary, written for no eye but his own, and in the use of which I must beware of the sin of violating the sanctuary, contains in the most concise of daily records all his various activities, and, at least after the summer at Cuddesdon, it presents an attractive picture of duty, industry, and attention, 'constant as the motion of the day.' The entries are much alike, and a few of them will suffice to bring his life and him before us. The days for 1830 may almost be taken at random.

*May* 10, 1830. — Prospectively, I have the following work to do in the course of this term. (I mention it now, that this may at least make me blush if I fail.) Butler's *Analogy*, analysis and synopsis. Herodotus, questions. St. Matthew and St. John. Mathematical lecture. *Aeneid*. Juvenal and Persius. *Ethics*, five books. Prideaux (a part of, for Herodotus). Themistocles Greciae valedicturus [I suppose a verse composition]. Something in divinity. Mathematical lecture. Breakfast with Gaskell, who had the Merton men. Papers. *Edinburgh Review* on Southey's *Colloquies* [Macaulay's]. *Ethics*. A wretched day. God forgive idleness. Note to Bible.

*May* 13. — Wrote to my mother. At debate (Union). Elected secretary. Papers. *British Critic* on *History of the Jews* [by Newman on Milman]. Herodotus, *Ethics*. Butler and analysis. Papers, Virgil, Herodotus. Juvenal. Mathematics and lecture. Walk with Anstice. Ethics, finished book 4.

*May* 25. — Finished Porteus's *Evidences*. Got up a few hard passages. Analysis of Porteus. Sundry matters in divinity. Themistocles. Sat with Biscoe talking. Walk with Canning and Gaskell. Wine and tea. Wrote to Mr. G. [his father]. Papers.

*June* 13. *Sunday*. — Chapel morning and evening. Thomas à Kempis. Erskine's *Evidence*. Tea with Mayow and Cole. Walked with Maurice to hear Mr. Porter, a wild but splendid preacher.

*June* 14. — Gave a large wine party. Divinity lecture. Mathematics. Wrote three long letters. Herodotus, began book 4. Prideaux. Newspapers, etc. Thomas à Kempis.

*June* 15. — Another wine party. *Ethics*, Herodotus. A little Juvenal. Papers. Hallam's poetry. Lecture on Herodotus. Phillimore got the verse prize.

*June* 16. — Divinity lecture. Herodotus. Papers. Out at wine. A little Plato.

*June* 17. — *Ethics* and lecture. Herodotus. T. à Kempis. Wine with Gaskell.

*June* 18. — Breakfast with Gaskell. T. à Kempis. Divinity lecture. Herodotus. Wrote on Philosophy *versus* Poetry. A little Persius. Wine with Buller and Tupper.

*June* 25. — *Ethics.* Collections 9–3. Among other things wrote a long paper on religions of Egypt, Persia, Babylon; and on the Satirists. Finished packing books and clothes. Left Oxford between 5–6, and walked fifteen miles towards Leamington. Then obliged to put in, being caught by a thunderstorm. Comfortably off in a country inn at Steeple Aston. Read and spouted some *Prometheus Vinctus* there.

*June* 26. — Started before 7. Walked eight miles to Banbury. Breakfast there, and walked on twenty-two to Leamington. Arrived at three and changed. Gaskell came in the evening. *Life of Massinger.*

*July* 6. *Cuddesdon.* — Up soon after 6. Began my Harmony of Greek Testament. Differential calculus, etc. Mathematics good while, but in a rambling way. Began *Odyssey.* Papers. Walk with Anstice and Hamilton. Turned a little bit of Livy into Greek. Conversation on ethics and metaphysics at night.

*July* 8. — Greek Testament. Bible with Anstice. Mathematics, long but did little. Translated some *Phaedo.* Butler. Construed some Thucydides at night. Making hay, etc., with S., H., and A. Great fun. Shelley.

*July* 10. — Greek Testament. Lightfoot. Butler, and writing a marginal analysis. Old Testament with Anstice and a discussion on early history. Mathematics. Cricket with H. and A. A conversation of two hours at night with A. on religion till past 12. Thucydides, etc. I cannot get anything done, though I seem to be employed a good while. Short's sermon.

*July* 11. — Church and Sunday-school teaching, morning and

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evening. The children miserably deluded. Barrow. Short. Walked with S.

*September* 4. — Same as yesterday. *Paradise Lost.* Dined with the bishop. Cards at night. I like them not, for they excite and keep me awake. Construing Sophocles.

*September* 18. — Went down early to Wheatley for letters. It is indeed true [the death of Huskisson], and he, poor man, was in his last agonies when I was playing cards on Wednesday night. When shall we learn wisdom? Not that I see folly in the fact of playing cards, but it is too often accompanied by a dissipated spirit.

He did not escape the usual sensations of the desultory when fate forces them to wear the collar. 'In fact, at times I find it very irksome, and my having the inclination to view it in that light is to me the surest demonstration that my mind was in great want of some discipline, and some regular exertion, for hitherto I have read by fits and starts and just as it pleased me. I hope that this vacation [summer of 1830] will confer on me one benefit more important than any having reference merely to my class — I mean the habit of steady application and strict economy of time.'

Among the recorded fragmentary items of 1830, by the way, he read Mill's celebrated essay on Coleridge, which, when it was republished a generation later along with the companion essay on Bentham, made so strong an impression on the Oxford of my day. He kept up a correspondence with Hallam, now at Cambridge, and an extract from one of Hallam's letters may show something of the writer, as of the friend for whose sympathising mind it was intended: —

Academical honours would be less than nothing to me were it not for my father's wishes, and even these are moderate on the subject. If it please God that I make the name I bear honoured in a second generation, it will be by inward power which is its own reward; if it please Him not, I hope to go down to the grave unrepining, for I have lived and loved and been loved; and what will be the momentary pangs of an atomic existence when the scheme of that providential love which pervades, sustains, quickens this boundless universe shall at the last day be unfolded

and adored? The great truth which, when we are rightly impressed with it, will liberate mankind is that no man has a right to isolate himself, because every man is a particle of a marvellous whole; that when he suffers, since it is for the good of that whole, he, the particle, has no right to complain; and in the long run, that which is the good of all will abundantly manifest itself to be the good of each. Other belief consists not with theism. This is its centre. Let me quote to their purpose the words of my favourite poet; it will do us good to hear his voice, though but for a moment: —

> 'One adequate support
> For the calamities of mortal life
> Exists — one only: an assured belief
> That the procession of our fate, howe'er
> Sad or disturbed, is ordered by a Being
> Of infinite benevolence and power,
> Whose everlasting purposes embrace
> All accidents, converting them to good.'[1]

Hallam's father, in that memoir so just and tender which he prefixes to his son's literary remains, remarks that all his son's talk about this old desperate riddle of the origin and significance of evil, like the talk of Leibnitz about it, resolved itself into an unproved assumption of the necessity of evil. In truth there is little sign that either Arthur Hallam or Gladstone had in him the making of the patient and methodical thinker in the high abstract sphere. They were both of them cast in another mould. But the efficacy of human relationships springs from a thousand subtler and more mysterious sources than either patience or method in our thinking. Such marked efficacy was there in the friendship of these two, both of them living under pure skies, but one of the pair endowed besides with 'the thews that throw the world.'

Whether in Gladstone's diary or in his letters, in the midst of Herodotus and Butler and Aristotle and the rest of the time-worn sages, we are curiously conscious of the presence of a spirit of action, affairs, excitement. It is not the born scholar eager in search of knowledge for its own sake; there is little of Milton's 'quiet air of delightful

[1] *Excursion*, Book iv. p. 1.

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studies ;' and none of Pascal's 'labouring for truth with many a heavy sigh.' The end of it all is, as Aristotle said it should be, not knowing but doing: — honourable desire of success, satisfaction of the hopes of friends, a general literary appetite, conscious preparation for private and public duty in the world, a steady progression out of the shallows into the depths, a gaze beyond garden and cloister, *in agmen*, *in pulverem*, *in clamorem*, to the dust and burning sun and shouting of the days of conflict.

IV

In September 1829, as we have seen, Huskisson had disappeared. Thomas Gladstone was in the train drawn by the *Dart* that ran over the statesman and killed him.

Poor Huskisson, he writes to William Gladstone, the great promoter of the railroad, has fallen a victim to its opening! . . . As soon as I heard that Huskisson had been run over, I ran and found him on the ground close to the duke's [Wellington] car, his legs apparently both broken (though only one was), the ground covered with blood, his eyes open, but death written in his face. When they raised him a little he said, 'Leave me, let me die.' 'God forgive me, I am a dead man.' 'I can never stand this.' . . . On Tuesday he made a speech in the Exchange reading room, when he said he hoped long to represent them. He said, too, that day, that we were sure of a fine day, for the duke would have his old luck. Talked jokingly, too, of insuring his life for the ride.

And he notes, as others did, the extraordinary circumstance that of half a million of people on the line of road the victim should be the duke's great opponent, thus carried off suddenly before his eyes.

There was some question of Mr. John Gladstone taking Huskisson's place as one of the members for Liverpool, but he did not covet it. He foresaw too many local jealousies, his deafness would be sadly against him, he was nearly sixty-five, and he felt himself too old to face the turmoil. He looked upon the Wellington government as the only government possible, though as a friend of Canning he freely recognised its defects, the self-will of the duke, and

the parcel of mediocrities and drones with whom, excepting Peel, he had filled his cabinet. His view of the state of parties in the autumn of 1830 is clear and succinct enough to deserve reproduction. 'Huskisson's death,' he writes to his son at Christ Church (October 29, 1830), 'was a great gain to the duke, for he was the most formidable thorn to prick him in the parliament. Of those who acted with Huskisson, none have knowledge or experience sufficient to enable them to do so. As for the whigs, they can all talk and make speeches, but they are not men of business. The ultra-tories are too contemptible and wanting in talent to be thought of. The radicals cannot be trusted, for they would soon pull down the venerable fabric of our constitution. The liberals or independents must at least generally side with the duke; they are likely to meet each other half way.'

In less than a week after this acute survey the duke made his stalwart declaration in the House of Lords against all parliamentary reform. 'I have not said too much, have I?' he asked of Lord Aberdeen on sitting down. 'You'll hear of it,' was Aberdeen's reply. 'You've announced the fall of your government, that's all,' said another. In a fortnight (November 18) the duke was out, Lord Grey was in, and the country was gradually plunged into a determined struggle for the amendment of its constitution.

Mr. Gladstone, as a resolute Canningite, was as fiercely hostile to the second and mightier innovation as he had been eager for the relief of the catholics, and it was in connection with the Reform bill that he first made a public mark. The reader will recall the stages of that event; how the bill was read a second time in the Commons by a majority of one on March 22nd, 1831; how, after a defeat by a majority of eight on a motion of going into committee, Lord Grey dissolved; how the country, shaken to its depths, gave the reformers such undreamed of strength, that on July 8th the second reading of the bill was carried by a hundred and thirty-six; how on October 8th the Lords rejected it by forty-one, and what violent commotions that deed provoked; how a third bill was brought in (December

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12th, 1831) and passed through the Commons (March 23rd, 1832); how the Lords were still refractory; what a lacerating ministerial crisis ensued; and how at last, in June, the bill, which was to work the miracle of a millennium, actually became the law of the land. Not even the pressure of preparation for the coming ordeal of the examination schools could restrain the activity and zeal of our Oxonian. Canning had denounced parliamentary reform at Liverpool in 1820; and afterwards had declared in the House of Commons that if anybody asked him what he meant to do on the subject, he would oppose reform to the end of his life, under whatever shape it might appear. Canning's disciple at Christ Church was as vehement as the master.[1] To a friend he wrote in 1865 : —

> I think that Oxford teaching had in our day an anti-popular tendency. I must add that it was not owing to the books, but rather to the way in which they were handled: and further, that it tended still more strongly in my opinion to make the love of truth paramount over all other motives in the mind, and thus that it supplied an antidote for whatever it had of bane. The Reform bill frightened me in 1831, and drove me off my natural and previous bias. Burke and Canning misled many on that subject, and they misled me.

While staying at Leamington, whither his family constantly went in order to be under the medical care of the famous Jephson, Mr. Gladstone went to a reform meeting at Warwick, of which he wrote a contemptuous account in a letter to the *Standard* (April 7). The gentry present were few, the nobility none, the clergy one only, while 'the mob beneath the grand stand was Athenian in its levity, in its recklessness, in its gaping expectancy, in its self-love and self-conceit — in everything but its acuteness.' 'If, sir, the nobility, the gentry, the clergy are to be alarmed, overawed, or smothered by the expression of popular opinion such as

[1] It is curious, we may note in passing, that Thomas Gladstone, his eldest brother, was then member for Queenborough, and he, after voting in the majority of one, a few weeks later changed his mind and supported the amendment that destroyed the first bill. At the election he lost his seat.

this, and if no great statesman be raised up in our hour of need to undeceive this unhappy multitude, now eagerly rushing or heedlessly sauntering along the pathway of revolution, as an ox goeth to the slaughter or a fool to the correction of the stocks, what is it but a symptom as infallible as it is appalling, that the day of our greatness and stability is no more, and that the chill and damp of death are already creeping over England's glory.' These dolorous spectres haunted him incessantly, as they haunted so many who had not the sovereign excuse of youth, and his rhetoric was perfectly sincere. He felt bound to say that, as far as he could form an opinion, the ministry most richly deserved impeachment. Its great innovations and its small alike moved his indignation. When Brougham committed the enormity of hearing causes on Good Friday, Gladstone repeats with deep complacency a saying of Wetherell, that Brougham was the first judge who had done such a thing since Pontius Pilate.

The undergraduates took their part in the humours of the great election, and Oxford turned out her chivalry gallantly to bring in the anti-reform candidate for the county to the nomination. 'I mounted the mare to join the anti-reform procession,' writes the impassioned student to his father, 'and we looked as well as we could do, considering that we were all covered with mud from head to foot. There was mob enough on both sides, but I must do them justice to say they were for the most part exceedingly good-humoured, and after we had dismounted, we went among them and elbowed one another and bawled and bellowed with the most perfect good temper. At the nomination in the town hall there was so much row raised that not one of the candidates could be heard.' The effect of these exercitations was a hoarseness and cold, which did not, however, prevent the sufferer from taking his part in a mighty bonfire in Peckwater. On another day: —

I went with Denison and another man named Jeffreys between eleven and twelve. We began to talk to some men among Weyland's friends; they crowded round, and began to holloa

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at us, and were making a sort of ring round us preparatory to a desperate hustle, when lo! up rushed a body of Norreys' men from St. Thomas's, broke their ranks, raised a shout, and rescued us in great style. I shall ever be grateful to the men of St. Thomas's. When we were talking, Jeffreys said something which made one man holloa, 'Oh, his father's a parson.' This happened to be true, and flabbergasted me, but he happily turned it by reminding them that they were going to vote for Mr. Harcourt, son of the greatest parson in England but one (Archbishop of York). Afterwards they left me, and I pursued my work alone, conversed with a great number, shook hands with a fair proportion, made some laugh, and once very nearly got hustled when alone, but happily escaped. You would be beyond measure astonished how unanimous and how *strong* is the feeling among the freeholders (who may be taken as a fair specimen of the generality of all counties) *against* the catholic question. Reformers and anti-reformers were alike sensitive on that point and perfectly agreed. One man said to me, 'What, vote for Lord Norreys? Why, he voted against the country *both* times, *for* the Catholic bill and then against the Reform.' What would this atrocious ministry have said had the appeal to the voice of the people, which they now quote as their authority, been made in 1829? I held forth to a working man, possibly a forty-shilling freeholder, [he adds in a fragment of later years,] on the established text, reform was revolution. To corroborate my doctrine I said, 'Why, look at the revolutions in foreign countries,' meaning of course France and Belgium. The man looked hard at me and said these very words, 'Damn all foreign countries, what has old England to do with foreign countries?' This is not the only time that I have received an important lesson from a humble source.

A more important scene which his own future eminence made in a sense historic, was a debate at the Union upon Reform in the same month, where his contribution (May 17th) struck all his hearers with amazement, so brilliant, so powerful, so incomparably splendid did it seem to their young eyes. His description of it to his brother (May 20th, 1831) is modest enough:—

I should really have been glad if your health had been such as

to have permitted your visiting Oxford last week, so that you might have heard our debate, for certainly there had never been anything like it known here before and will scarcely be again. The discussion on the question that the ministers were incompetent to carry on the government of the country was of a miscellaneous character, and I moved what they called a 'rider' to the effect that the Reform bill threatened to change the form of the British government, and ultimately to break up the whole frame of society. The debate altogether lasted three nights, and it closed then, partly because the *votes* had got tired of dancing attendance, partly because the speakers of the revolutionary side were exhausted. There were eight or nine more on ours ready, and indeed anxious. As it was, there were I think fifteen speeches on our side and thirteen on theirs, or something of that kind. Every man spoke above his average, and many very far beyond it. They were generally short enough. Moncreiff, a long-winded Scotsman, spouted nearly an hour, and I was guilty of three-quarters. I remember at Eton (where we used, when I first went into the society, to speak from three to ten minutes) I thought it must be one of the finest things in the world to speak for three-quarters of an hour, and there was a legend circulated about an old member of the society's having done so, which used to make us all gape and stare. However, I fear it does not necessarily imply much more than length. Doyle spoke remarkably well, and made a violent attack on Mr. Canning's friends, which Gaskell did his best to answer, but very ineffectually from the nature of the case. We got a conversion speech from a Christ Church gentleman-commoner, named Alston, which produced an excellent effect, and the division was favourable beyond anything we had hoped — ninety-four to thirty-eight. We should have had larger numbers still had we divided on the first night. Great diligence was used by both parties in bringing men down, but the tactics on the whole were better on our side, and we had fewer truants in proportion to our numbers. England expects every man to do his duty; and ours, humble as it is, has been done in reference to this question. On Friday I wrote a letter to the *Standard* giving an account of the division, which you will see in Saturday's paper, if you think it worth while to refer to it. The way in which the present

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generation of undergraduates is divided on the question is quite remarkable.

The occasion was to prove a memorable one in his career, and a few more lines about it from his diary will not be considered superfluous : —

*May* 16*th.* — Sleepy. Mathematics, few and shuffling, and lecture. Read Canning's reform speeches at Liverpool and made extracts. Rode out. Debate, which was adjourned. I am to try my hand to-morrow. My thoughts were but ill-arranged, but I fear they will be no better then. Wine with Anstice. Singing. Tea with Lincoln.

*May* 17*th.* — Ethics. Little mathematics. A good deal exhausted in forenoon from heat last night. Dined with White and had wine with him, also with young Acland. Cogitations on reform, etc. Difficult to *select* matter for a speech, not to gather it. *Spoke at the adjourned debate for three-quarters of an hour ;* immediately after Gaskell, who was preceded by Lincoln. Row afterwards and adjournment. Tea with Wordsworth.

When Gladstone sat down, one of his contemporaries has written, 'we all of us felt that an epoch in our lives had occurred. His father was so well pleased with the glories of the speech and with its effect, that he wished to have it published. Besides his speech, besides the composition of sturdy placards against the monstrous bill, and besides the preparation of an elaborate petition [1] and the gathering of 770 signatures to it, the ardent anti-reformer, though the distance from the days of doom in the examination schools was rapidly shrinking, actually sat down to write a long pamphlet (July 1831) and sent it to Hatchard, the publisher. Hatchard doubted the success of an anonymous pamphlet, and replied in the too familiar formula that has frozen so many thousand glowing hearts, that he would publish it if the author would take the money risk. The most interesting thing about it is the criticism of the writer's shrewd and wise father upon his son's performance (too long for reproduction here). He went with his son in the main, he says,

[1] It is given in Robbins, *Early Life*, pp. 104-5.

'but I cannot go all your lengths,' and the language of his judgment sheds a curious light upon the vehement temperament of Mr. Gladstone at this time as it struck an affectionate yet firm and sober monitor.

In the autumn of 1831 Mr. Gladstone took some trouble to be present on one of the cardinal occasions in this fluctuating history: —

*October 3rd to 8th.* — Journey to London. From Henley in Blackstone's chaise. Present at five nights' debate of infinite interest in the House of Lords. The first, I went forwards and underwent a somewhat high pressure. At the four others sat on a round transverse rail, very fortunate in being so well placed. Had a full view of the peeresses. There nine or ten hours every evening. Read Peel's speech and sundry papers relating to King's College, which I went to see; also London Bridge. Read introduction to Butler. Wrote to Saunders. Much occupied in order-hunting during the morning. Lord Brougham's as a speech most wonderful, delivered with a power and effect which cannot be appreciated by any hearsay mode of information, and with fertile exuberance in sarcasm. In point of argument it had, I think, little that was new. Lord Grey's most beautiful, Lord Goderich's and Lord Lansdowne's extremely good, and in these was comprehended nearly all the oratorical merit of the debate. The reasoning or the attempt to reason, independently of the success in such attempt, certainly seemed to me to be with the opposition. Their best speeches, I thought, were those of Lords Harrowby, Carnarvon, Mansfield, Wynford; next Lords Lyndhurst, Wharncliffe, and the Duke of Wellington. Lord Grey's reply I did not hear, having been compelled by exhaustion to leave the House. Remained with Ryder and Pickering in the coffee-room or walking about until the division, and joined Wellesley and [illegible] as we walked home. Went to bed for an hour, breakfasted, and came off by the Alert. Arrived safely, thank God, in Oxford. Wrote to my brother and to Gaskell. Tea with Phillimore and spent the remainder of the evening with Canning. The consequences of the vote may be awful. God avert this. But it was an honourable and manly decision, and so may God avert them.

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This was the memorable occasion when the Lords threw out the Reform bill by 199 to 158, the division not taking place until six o'clock in the morning. The consequences, as the country instantly made manifest, were 'awful' enough to secure the reversal of the decision. It seems, so far as I can make out, to have been the first debate that one of the most consummate debaters that ever lived had the fortune of listening to.

V

Meanwhile intense interest in parliament and the newspapers had not impaired his studies. Disgusted as he was at the political outlook, in the beginning of July he had fallen fairly to work more or less close for ten or twelve hours a day. It 'proved as of old a cure for ill-humour, though in itself not of the most delectable kind. It is odd enough, though true, that reading hard close-grained stuff produces a much more decided and better effect in this way, than books written professedly for the purpose of entertainment.' Then his eyes became painful, affected the head, and in August almost brought him to a full stop. After absolute remission of work for a few days, he slowly spread full sail again, and took good care no more to stint either exercise or sleep, thinking himself, strange as it now sounds, rather below than above par for such exertions. He declared that the bodily fatigue, the mental fatigue, and the anxiety as to the result, made reading for a class a thing not to be undergone more than once in a lifetime. Time had mightier fatigues in store for him than even this. The heavy work among the ideas of men of bygone days did not deaden intellectual projects of his own. A few days before he went to see the Lords throw out the Reform bill, he made a curious entry: —

*October 3rd*, 1831. — Yesterday an idea, a chimera, entered my head, of gathering during the progress of my life, notes and materials for a work embracing three divisions, Morals, Politics, Education, and I commit this notice to paper now, that many years hence, if it please God, I may find it either a pleasant or at least

an instructive reminiscence, a pleasant and instructing one, I trust, if I may ever be permitted to execute this design; instructive if it shall point while in embryo, and serve to teach me the folly of presumptuous schemes conceived during the buoyancy of youth, and only relinquished on a discovery of incompetency in later years. Meanwhile I am only contemplating the gradual accumulation of materials.

The reading went on at a steady pace, not without social intermissions: —

*Oct. 11th and 12th.* — Rode. Papers. Virgil. Thucydides, both days. Also some optics. Wrote a long letter home. Read a chapter of Butler each day. Hume. Breakfasted also with Canning to meet Lady C[anning]. She received us, I thought, with great kindness, and spoke a great deal about Lord Grey's conduct with reference to her husband's memory, with great animation and excitement; her hand in a strong tremor. It was impossible not to enter into her feelings.

Then comes the struggle for the palm: —

*Monday, November 7th to Saturday 12th.* — In the schools or preparing. Read most of Niebuhr. Finished going over the *Agamemnon*. Got up Aristophanic and other hard words. Went over my books of extracts, etc. Read some of Whately's rhetoric. Got up a little Polybius, and the history out of Livy, decade one. In the schools Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday; each day about six and a half hours at work or under. First Strafford's speech into Latin with logical and rhetorical questions — the latter somewhat abstract. Dined at Gaskell's and met Pearson, a clever and agreeable man. On Thursday a piece of Johnson's preface in morning, in evening critical questions which I did very badly, but I afterwards heard, better than *the rest*, which I could not and cannot understand. On Friday we had in the morning historical questions. Wrote a vast quantity of matter, ill enough digested. In the evening, Greek to translate and illustrate. Heard cheering accounts indirectly of myself, for which I ought to be very thankful. . . . Dined with Pearson at the Mitre. Very kind in him to ask me. Made Saturday in great measure an idle day. Had a good ride with Gaskell. Spent part of the

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evening with him. Read about six hours. *Sunday, November 13th.* — Chapel thrice. Breakfast and much conversation with Cameron. Read Bible. Some divinity of a character approaching to cram. Looked over my shorter abstract of Butler. Tea with Harrison. Walk with Gaskell. Wine with Hamilton, more of a party than I quite liked or expected. Altogether my mind was in an unsatisfactory state, though I heard a most admirable sermon from Tyler on Bethesda, which could not have been more opportune if written on purpose for those who are going into the schools. But I am cold, timid, and worldly, and not in a healthy state of mind for the great trial of to-morrow, to which I know I am utterly and miserably unequal, but which I also know will be sealed for good. . . .

Here is his picture of his *viva voce* examination : —

*November 14th.* — Spent the morning chiefly in looking over my Polybius; short abstract of ethics, and definitions. Also some hard words. Went into the schools at ten, and from this time was little troubled with fear. Examined by Stocker in divinity. I did not answer as I could have wished. Hampden [the famous heresiarch] in science, a beautiful examination, and with every circumstance in my favour. He said to me, 'Thank you, you have construed extremely well, and appear to be thoroughly acquainted with your books,' or something to that effect. Then followed a very clever examination in history from Garbett, and an agreeable and short one in my poets from Cremer, who spoke very kindly to me at the close. I was only put on in eight books besides the Testament, namely Rhetoric, Ethics, *Phædo*, Herodotus, Thucydides, *Odyssey*, Aristophanes (*Vespae*), and Persius. Everything was in my favour; the examiners kind beyond everything; a good many persons there, and all friendly. At the end of the science, of course, my spirits were much raised, and I could not help at that moment [giving thanks] to Him without whom not even such moderate performances would have been in my power. Afterwards rode to Cuddesdon with the Denisons, and wrote home with exquisite pleasure.

I have read a story by some contemporary how all attempts to puzzle him by questions on the minutest details

of Herodotus only brought out his knowledge more fully; how the excitement reached its climax when the examiner, after testing his mastery of some point of theology, said: 'We will now leave that part of the subject,' and the candidate, carried away by his interest in the subject, answered: 'No, sir; if you please, we will not leave it yet,' and began to pour forth a fresh stream. Ten days later, after a morning much disturbed and excited he rode in the afternoon, and by half-past four the list was out, with Gladstone and Denison both of them in the first class; Phillimore and Maurice in the second; Herbert in the fourth.

Then mathematics were to come. The interval between the two schools he passed at Cuddesdon, working some ten hours a day at his hardest, riding every day with Denison, and all of them in high spirits. But optics, algebra, geometry, calculus, trigonometry, and the rest, filled him with misgivings for the future. 'Every day I read, I am more and more thoroughly convinced of my incapacity for the subject.' 'My work continued and my reluctance to exertion increased with it.' For the Sunday before the examination, this is the entry, and a characteristic and remarkable one it is: — 'Teaching in the school morning and evening. Saunders preached well on "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." Read Bible and four of Horsley's sermons. Paid visits to old people.'

On December 10th the mathematical ordeal began, and lasted four days. The doctor gave him draughts to quiet his excitement. Better than draughts, he read Wordsworth every day. On Sunday (December 11th) he went, as usual, twice to chapel, and heard Newman preach 'a most able discourse of a very philosophical character, more apt for reading than for hearing — at least I, in the jaded state of my mind, was unable to do it any justice.' On December 14th, the list was out, and his name was again in the first class, again along with Denison. As everybody knows, Peel had won a double-first twenty-three years before, and in mathematics Peel had the first class to himself. Mr. Gladstone in each of the two schools was one of five. Anstice, whose counsels and example he counted for so much at one

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epoch in his collegiate life, in 1830 carried off the same double crown, and was, like Peel, alone in the mathematical first class.

It was an hour of thrilling happiness, between the past and the future, for the future was, I hope, not excluded; and feeling was well kept in check by the bustle of preparation for speedy departure. Saw the Dean, Biscoe, Saunders (whom I thanked for his extreme kindness), and such of my friends as were in Oxford; all most warm. The mutual hand-shaking between Denison, Jeffreys, and myself, was very hearty. Wine with Bruce. . . . Packed up my things. . . . Wrote at more or less length to Mrs. G. [his mother], Gaskell, Phillimore, Mr. Denison, my old tutor Knapp. . . . Left Oxford on the Champion.

*December 15th.* — After finding the first practicable coach to Cambridge was just able to manage breakfast in Bedford Square. Left Holborn at ten, in Cambridge before five.

Here he was received by Wordsworth, the master of Trinity, and father of his Oxford tutor. He had a visit full of the peculiar excitement and felicity that those who are capable of it know nowhere else than at Oxford and Cambridge. He heard Hallam recite his declamation; was introduced to the mighty Whewell, to Spedding, the great Baconian, to Smyth, the professor of history, to Blakesley; renewed his acquaintance with the elder Hallam; listened to glorious anthems at Trinity and King's; tried to hear a sermon from Simeon, the head of the English evangelicals; met Stanhope, an old Eton man, and the two sons of Lord Grey; and 'copied a letter of Mr. Pitt's.' From Cambridge he made his way home, having thus triumphantly achieved the first stage of his long life journey. Amid the manifold mutations of his career, to Oxford his affection was passionate as it was constant. 'There is not a man that has passed through that great and famous university that can say with more truth than I can say, I love her from the bottom of my heart.'[1]

[1] Oxford, Feb. 5, 1890.

VI

CHAP. III. ÆT. 22

Another episode must have a place before I close this chapter. At the end of 1828, the youthful Gladstone had composed a long letter, of which the manuscript survives, to a Liverpool newspaper, earnestly contesting its appalling proposition that 'man has no more control over his belief, than he has over his stature or his colour,' and beseeching the editor to try Leslie's *Short Method with the Deists*, if he be unfortunate enough to doubt the authority of the Bible. At Oxford his fervour carried him beyond the fluent tract to a personal decision. On August 4th, 1830, the entry is this: — 'Began Thucydides. Also working up Herodotus. ἐξηρτυμένος. Construing Thucydides at night. Uncomfortable again and much distracted with doubts as to my future line of conduct. God direct me. I am utterly blind. Wrote a very long letter to my dear father on the subject of my future profession, wishing if possible to bring the question to an immediate and final settlement.' The letter is exorbitant in length, it is vague, it is obscure; but the appeal contained in it is as earnest as any appeal from son to parent on such a subject ever was, and it is of special interest as the first definite indication alike of the extraordinary intensity of his religious disposition, and of that double-mindedness, that division of sensibility between the demands of spiritual and of secular life, which remained throughout one of the marking traits of his career. He declares his conviction that his duty, alike to man as a social being, and as a rational and reasonable being to God, summons him with a voice too imperative to be resisted, to forsake the ordinary callings of the world and to take upon himself the clerical office. The special need of devotion to that office, he argues, must be plain to any one who 'casts his eye over the moral wilderness of the world, who contemplates the pursuits, desires, designs, and principles of the beings that move so busily in it to and fro, without an object beyond the finding food for it, mental or bodily, for the present moment.' This letter the reader will find in

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full elsewhere.[1] The missionary impulse, the yearning for some apostolic destination, the glow of self-devotion to a supreme external will, is a well-known element in the youth of ardent natures of either sex. In a thousand forms, sometimes for good, sometimes for evil, such a mood has played its part in history. In this case, as in many another, the impulse in its first shape did not endure, but in essence it never faded.

His father replied as a wise man was sure to do, almost with sympathy, with entire patience, and with thorough common sense. The son dutifully accepts the admonition that it is too early to decide so grave an issue, and that the immediate matter is the approaching performance in the examination schools. 'I highly approve,' his father had written (Nov. 8th, 1830), 'your proposal to leave undetermined the profession you are to follow, until you return from the continent and complete your education in all respects. You will then have seen more of the world and have greater confidence in the choice you may make; for it will then rest wholly with yourself, having our advice whenever you may wish for it.' The critical issue was now finally settled. At almost equal length, and in parts of this second letter no less vague and obscure than the first, but with more concentrated power, Mr. Gladstone tells his father (Jan. 17th, 1832) how the excitement has subsided, but still he sees at hand a great crisis in the history of mankind. New principles, he says, prevail in morals, politics, education. Enlightened self-interest is made the substitute for the old bonds of unreasoned attachment, and under the plausible maxim that knowledge is power, one kind of ignorance is made to take the place of another kind. Christianity teaches that the head is to be exalted through the heart, but Benthamism maintains that the heart is to be amended through the head. The conflict proceeding in parliament foreshadows a contest for the existence of the church establishment, to be assailed through its property. The whole foundation of society may go. Under circumstances so formidable, he dares not look

[1] See Appendix.

for the comparative calm and ease of a professional life. He must hold himself free of attachment to any single post and function of a technical nature. And so — to make the long story short — 'My own desires for future life are exactly coincident with yours, in so far as I am acquainted with them; believing them to be a *profession* of the law, with a view substantially to studying the constitutional branch of it, and a subsequent experiment, as time and circumstances might offer, on what is termed public life.' 'It tortures me,' he had written to his brother John (August 29th, 1830), 'to think of an inclination opposed to that of my beloved father,' and this was evidently one of the preponderant motives in his final decision.

In the same letter, while the fire of apostolic devotion was still fervid within him, he had penned a couple of sentences that contain words of deeper meaning than he could surely know: — 'I am willing to persuade myself that in spite of other longings which I often feel, my heart is prepared to yield other hopes and other desires for this — of being permitted to be the humblest of those who may be commissioned to set before the eyes of man, still great even in his ruins, the magnificence and the glory of Christian truth. Especially as I feel that my temperament is so excitable, that I should fear giving up my mind to other subjects which have ever proved sufficiently alluring to me, and which I fear would make my life a fever of unsatisfied longings and expectations.' So men unconsciously often hint an oracle of their lives. Perhaps these forebodings of a high-wrought hour may in other hues have at many moments come back to Mr. Gladstone's mind, even in the full sunshine of a triumphant career of duty, virtue, power, and renown.

The entry in his diary, suggested by the return of his birthday (Dec. 29, 1831), closes with the words, 'This has been my debating society year, now, I fancy, done with. Politics are fascinating to me; perhaps too fascinating.' Higher thoughts than this press in upon him: —

Industry of a kind and for a time there has been, but the industry of necessity, not of principle. I would fain believe that

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my sentiments in religion have been somewhat enlarged and untrammelled, but if this be true, my responsibility is indeed augmented, but wherein have my deeds of duty been proportionally modified? . . . One conclusion theoretically has been much on my mind — it is the increased importance and necessity and benefit of prayer — of the life of obedience and self-sacrifice. May God use me as a vessel for his own purposes, of whatever character and results in relation to myself. . . . May the God who loves us all, still vouchsafe me a testimony of His abiding presence in the protracted, though well nigh dormant life of a desire which at times has risen high in my soul, a fervent and a buoyant hope that I might work an energetic work in this world, and by that work (whereof the worker is only God) I might grow into the image of the Redeemer. . . . It matters not whether the sphere of duty be large or small, but may it be duly filled. May those faint and languishing embers be kindled by the truth of the everlasting spirit into a living and a life-giving flame.

Every reader will remember how, just two hundred years before, the sublimest of English poets had on his twenty-third birthday closed the same self-reproach for sluggishness of inward life, with the same aspiration: —

> Yet be it less or more, or soon or slow,
> It shall be still in strictest measure even
> To that same lot however mean or high,
> Towards which time leads me and the will of heaven.
> All is, if I have grace to use it so,
> As ever in my great taskmaster's eye.

Two generations after he had quitted the university, Mr. Gladstone summed up her influence upon him: —

Oxford had rather tended to hide from me the great fact that liberty is a great and precious gift of God, and that human excellence cannot grow up in a nation without it. And yet I do not hesitate to say that Oxford had even at this time laid the foundations of my liberalism. School pursuits had revealed little; but in the region of philosophy she had initiated if not inured me to the pursuit of truth as an end of study. The splendid integrity of Aristotle, and still more of Butler, conferred upon me an inestimable service. Elsewhere I have not scrupled to

speak with severity of myself, but I declare that while in the arms of Oxford, I was possessed through and through with a single-minded and passionate love of truth, with a virgin love of truth, so that, although I might be swathed in clouds of prejudice there was something of an eye within, that might gradually pierce them.

CHAP. III.

Æt. 22.

# Book II

*1832–1846*

## CHAPTER I

### ENTERS PARLIAMENT

*(1832-1834)*

I MAY speak of the House of Commons as a school of discipline for those who enter it. In my opinion it is a school of extraordinary power and efficacy. It is a great and noble school for the creation of all the qualities of force, suppleness, and versatility of intellect. And it is also a great moral school. It is a school of temper. It is also a school of patience. It is a school of honour, and it is a school of justice. — GLADSTONE (1878).

BOOK II. 1832.

LEAVING home in the latter part of January (1832), with a Wordsworth for a pocket companion, Mr. Gladstone made his way to Oxford, where he laboured through his packing, settled accounts, 'heard a very able sermon indeed from Newman at St. Mary's,' took his bachelor's degree (Jan. 26), and after a day or two with relatives and friends in London, left England along with his brother John at the beginning of February. He did not return until the end of July. He visited Brussels, Paris, Florence, Naples, Rome, Venice, and Milan. Of this long journey he kept a full record, and it contains one entry of no small moment in his mental history. A conception now began to possess him, that according to one religious school kindled a saving illumination, and according to another threw something of a shade upon his future path. In either view it marked a change of spiritual course, a transformation not of religion as the centre of his being, for that it always was, but of the frame and mould within which religion was to expand.

*William Ewart Gladstone*

*from a painting by William Bradley.*

In entering St. Peter's at Rome (March 31, 1832) he experienced his 'first conception of unity in the Church,' and first longed for its visible attainment. Here he felt 'the pain and shame of the schism which separates us from Rome — whose guilt surely rests not upon the venerable fathers of the English Reformed Church but upon Rome itself, yet whose melancholy effects the mind is doomed to feel when you enter this magnificent temple and behold in its walls the images of Christian saints and the words of everlasting truth; yet such is the mass of intervening encumbrances that you scarcely own, and can yet more scantily realise, any bond of sympathy or union.' This was no fleeting impression of a traveller. It had been preceded by a disenchantment, for he had made his way from Turin to Pinerol, and seen one of the Vaudois valleys. He had framed a lofty conception of the people as ideal Christians, and he underwent a chill of disappointment on finding them apparently much like other men. Even the pastor, though a quiet, inoffensive man, gave no sign of energy or of what would have been called in England vital religion. With this chill at his heart he came upon the atmosphere of gorgeous Rome. It was, however, in the words of Clough's fine line from *Easter Day*, 'through the great sinful streets of Naples as he passed,' that a great mutation overtook him.

One Sunday (May 13) something, I know not what, set me on examining the occasional offices of the church in the prayer book. They made a strong impression upon me on that very day, and the impression has never been effaced. I had previously taken a great deal of teaching direct from the Bible, as best I could, but now the figure of the Church arose before me as a teacher too, and I gradually found in how incomplete and fragmentary a manner I had drawn divine truth from the sacred volume, as indeed I had also missed in the thirty-nine articles some things which ought to have taught me better. Such, for I believe that I have given the fact as it occurred, in its silence and its solitude, was my first introduction to the august conception of the Church of Christ. It presented to me Christianity under an aspect in which I had not yet known it: its ministry of symbols, its

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channels of grace, its unending line of teachers joining from the Head: a sublime construction, based throughout upon historic fact, uplifting the idea of the community in which we live, and of the access which it enjoys through the new and living way to the presence of the Most High. From this time I began to feel my way by degrees into or towards a true notion of the Church. It became a definite and organised idea when, at the suggestion of James Hope, I read the just published and remarkable work of Palmer. But the charm of freshness lay upon that first disclosure of 1832.

This mighty question: — what is the nature of a church and what the duties, titles, and symbols of faithful membership, which in divers forms had shaken the world for so many ages and now first dawned upon his ardent mind, was the germ of a deep and lasting pre-occupation of which we shall speedily and without cessation find abundant traces.

II

A few weeks later, the great rival interest in Mr. Gladstone's life, if rival we may call it, was forced into startling prominence before him. At Milan he received a letter from Lord Lincoln, saying that he was commissioned by his father, the Duke of Newcastle, to inform him that his influence in the borough of Newark was at Mr. Gladstone's disposal if he should be ready to enter parliamentary life. This was the fruit of his famous anti-reform speech at the Oxford Union. No wonder that such an offer made him giddy. 'This stunning and overpowering proposal,' he says to his father (July 8), 'naturally left me the whole of the evening on which I received it, in a flutter of confusion. Since that evening there has been time to reflect, and to see that it is not of so intoxicating a character as it seemed at first. First, because the Duke of Newcastle's offer must have been made at the instance of a single person (Lincoln), that person young and sanguine, and I may say in such a matter partial. . . . This much at least became clear to me by the time I had recovered my breath: that decidedly more than mere permission from my dear father would be necessary to authorise my entering on the consideration of particulars

at all.' And then he falls into a vein of devout reflection, almost as if this sudden destination of his life were some irrevocable priesthood or vow of monastic profession, and not the mere stringent secularity of labour in a parliament. It would be thin and narrow to count all this an overstrain. To a nature like his, of such eager strength of equipment; conscious of life as a battle and not a parade; apt for all external action yet with a burning glow of light and fire in the internal spirit; resolute from the first in small things and in great against aimless drift and eddy,—to such an one the moment of fixing alike the goal and the track may well have been grave.

Then points of doubt arose. 'It is, I daresay, in your recollection,'—this to his father,—'that at the time when Mr. Canning came to power, the Duke of Newcastle, in the House of Lords, declared him the most profligate minister the country had ever had. Now it struck me to inquire of myself, does the duke know the feelings I happen to entertain towards Mr. Canning? Does he know, or can he have had in his mind, my father's connection with Mr. Canning?' The duke had in fact been one of the busiest and bitterest of Canning's enemies, and had afterwards in the same spirit striven with might and main to keep Huskisson out of the Wellington cabinet. Another awkwardness appeared. The duke had offered a handsome contribution towards expenses. Would not this tend to abridge the member's independence? What was the footing on which patron and member were to stand? Mr. Gladstone was informed by his brother that the duke had neither heretofore asked for pledges, nor now demanded them.

After a very brief correspondence with his shrewd and generous father, the plunge was taken, and on his return to England, after a fortnight spent 'in an amphibious state between that of a candidate and ἰδιώτης or private person,' he issued his address to the electors of Newark (August 4, 1832). He did not go actually on to the ground until the end of September. The intervening weeks he spent with his family at Torquay, where he varied electioneering correspondence and yachting with plenty of sufficiently serious

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reading from Blackstone and Plato and the *Excursion* down to *Corinne*. One Sunday morning (September 23), his father burst into his bedroom, with the news that his presence was urgently needed at Newark. 'I rose, dressed, and breakfasted speedily, with infinite disgust. I left Torquay at 8¾ and devoted my Sunday to the journey. Was I right? . . . My father drove me to Newton; chaise to Exeter. There near an hour; went to the cathedral and heard a part of the prayers. Mail to London. Conversation with a tory countryman who got in for a few miles, on Sunday travelling, which we agreed in disapproving. Gave him some tracts. Excellent mail. Dined at Yeovil; read a little of the *Christian Year* [published 1827]. At 6½ A.M. arrived at Piccadilly, 18½ hours from Exeter. Went to Fetter Lane, washed and breakfasted, and came off at 8 o'clock by a High Flyer for Newark. The sun hovered red and cold through the heavy fog of London sky, but in the country the day was fine. Tea at Stamford; arrived at Newark at midnight.' Such in forty hours was the first of Mr. Gladstone's countless political pilgrimages.

His two election addresses are a curious starting-point for so memorable a journey. Thrown into the form of a modern programme, the points are these: — union of church and state, the defence in particular of our Irish establishments; correction of the poor laws; allotment of cottage grounds; adequate remuneration of labour; a system of Christian instruction for the West Indian slaves, but no emancipation until that instruction had fitted them for it; a dignified and impartial foreign policy. The duke was much startled by the passage about labour receiving adequate remuneration, 'which unhappily among several classes of our fellow countrymen is not now the case.' He did not, however, interfere. The whig newspaper said roundly of the first of Mr. Gladstone's two addresses, that a more jumbled collection of words had seldom been sent from the press. The tory paper, on the contrary, congratulated the constituency on a candidate of considerable commercial experience and talent. The anti-slavery men fought him stoutly. They put his name into their black schedule with

nine-and-twenty other candidates, they harried him with posers from a pamphlet of his father's, and they met his doctrine that if slavery were sinful the Bible would not have commended the regulation of it, by bluntly asking him on the hustings whether he knew a text in Exodus declaring that 'he that stealeth a man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death.' His father's pamphlets undoubtedly exposed a good deal of surface. We cannot be surprised that any adherent of these standard sophistries should be placed on the black list of the zealous soldiers of humanity. The candidate held to the ground he had taken at Oxford and in his election address, and apparently made converts. He had an interview with forty voters of abolitionist complexion at his hotel, and according to the friendly narrative of his brother, who was present, 'he shone not only in his powers of conversation, but by the tact, quickness, and talent with which he made his replies, to the thorough and complete satisfaction of baptists, wesleyan methodists, and I may say even, of almost every religious sect! Not one refused their vote: they came forward, and enrolled their names, though before, I believe, they never supported any one on the duke's interest!'

The humours of an election of the ancient sort are a very old story, and Newark had its full share of them. The register contained rather under sixteen hundred voters on a scot and lot qualification, to elect a couple of members. The principal influence over about one quarter of them was exercised by the Duke of Newcastle, who three years before had punished the whigs of the borough for the outrage of voting against his nominee, by serving, in concert with another proprietor, forty of them with notice to quit. Then the trodden worm turned. The notices were framed, affixed to poles, and carried with bands of music through the streets. Even the audacity of a petition to parliament was projected. The duke, whose chief fault was not to know that time had brought him into a novel age, defended himself with the haughty truism, then just ceasing to be true, that he had a right to do as he liked with his own. This clear-cut enun-

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ciation of a vanishing principle became a sort of landmark, and gave to his name an unpleasing immortality in our political history. In the high tide of agitation for reform the whigs gave the duke a beating, and brought their man to the top of the poll, a tory being his colleague. Handley, the tory, on our present occasion seemed safe, and the fight lay between Mr. Gladstone and Sergeant Wilde, the sitting whig, a lawyer of merit and eminence, who eighteen years later went to the woolsack as Lord Truro. Reform at Newark was already on the ebb. Mr. Gladstone, though mocked as a mere schoolboy, and fiercely assailed as a slavery man, exhibited from the first hour of the fight tremendous gifts of speech and skill of fence. His Red club worked valiantly; the sergeant did not play his cards skilfully; and pretty early in the long struggle it was felt that the duke would this time come into his own again. The young student soon showed that his double first class, his love of books, his religious preoccupations, had not unfitted him by a single jot for one of the most arduous of all forms of the battle of life. He proved a diligent and prepossessing canvasser, an untiring combatant, and of course the readiest and most fluent of speakers. Wilde after hearing him said sententiously to one of his own supporters, 'There is a great future before this young man.' The rather rotten borough became suffused with the radiant atmosphere of Olympus. The ladies presented their hero with a banner of red silk, and an address expressive of their conviction that the good old Red cause was the salvation of their ancient borough. The young candidate in reply speedily put it in far more glowing colours. It was no trivial banner of a party club, it was the red flag of England that he saw before him, the symbol of national moderation and national power, under which, when every throne on the continent had crumbled into dust beneath the tyrannous strength of France, mankind had found sure refuge and triumphant hope, and the blast that tore every other ensign to tatters served only to unfold their own and display its beauty and its glory. Amid these oratorical splendours the old hands of the club silently supplemented eloquence and argument by darker agencies, of which happily

the candidate knew little until after. There was a red band and each musician received fifteen shillings a day, there happening accidentally to be among them no fewer than ten patriotic red plumpers. Large tea-parties attracted red ladies. The inns great and small were thrown joyously open on one side or other, and when the time came, our national heroes from Robin Hood to Lord Nelson and the Duke of Wellington, as well as half the animal kingdom, the swan and salmon, horses, bulls, boars, lions, and eagles, of all the colours of the rainbow and in every kind of strange partnership, sent in bills for meat and liquor supplied to free and independent electors to the tune of a couple of thousand pounds. Apart from these black arts, and apart from the duke's interest, there was a good force of the staunch and honest type, the life-blood of electioneering and the salvation of party government, who cried stoutly, 'I was born Red, I live Red, and I will die Red.' 'We started on the canvass,' says one who was with Mr. Gladstone, 'at eight in the morning and worked at it for about nine hours, with a great crowd, band and flags, and innumerable glasses of beer and wine all jumbled together; then a dinner of 30 or 40, with speeches and songs until say ten o'clock; then he always played a rubber of whist, and about twelve or one I got to bed and not to sleep.'

At length the end came. At the nomination the show of hands was against the reds, but when the poll was taken and closed on the second day, Gladstone appeared at the head of it with 887 votes, against 798 for his colleague Handley, and 726 for the fallen Wilde. 'Yesterday' (Dec. 13, 1832), he tells his father, 'we went to the town hall at 9 A.M., when the mayor cast up the numbers and declared the poll. While he was doing this the popular wrath vented itself for the most part upon Handley. . . . The sergeant obtained me a hearing, and I spoke for perhaps an hour or more, but it was flat work, as they were no more than patient, and agreed with but little that I said. The sergeant then spoke for an hour and a half. . . . He went into matters connected with his own adieu to Newark, besought the people most energetically to bear with their disappointment like men,

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and expressed his farewell with great depth of feeling. Affected to tears himself, he affected others also. In the evening near fifty dined here [Clinton Arms] and the utmost enthusiasm was manifested.' The new member began his first speech as a member of parliament as follows: —

Gentlemen: In looking forward to the field which is now opened before me, I cannot but conceive that I shall often be reproached with being not your representative but the representative of the Duke of Newcastle. Now I should rather incline to exaggerate than to extenuate such connection as does exist between me and that nobleman: and for my part should have no reluctance to see every sentiment which ever passed between us, whether by letter or by word of mouth, exposed to the view of the world. I met the Duke of Newcastle upon the broad ground of public principle, and upon that ground alone. I own no other bond of union with him than this, that he in his exalted sphere, and I in my humble one, entertained the same persuasion, that the institutions of this country are to be defended against those who threaten their destruction, at all hazards, and to all extremities. Why do you return me to parliament? Not because I am the Duke of Newcastle's man, simply: but because, coinciding with the duke in political sentiment, you likewise admit that one possessing so large a property here, and faithfully discharging the duties which the possession of that property entails, ought in the natural course of things to exercise a certain influence. You return me to parliament, not merely because I am the Duke of Newcastle's man: but because both the man whom the duke has sent, and the duke himself, are *your men*.

The election was of course pointed to by rejoicing conservatives as a proof the more of that reaction which the ministerial and radical press was audacious enough to laugh at. This borough, says the local journalist, was led away by the bubble reform, to support those who by specious and showy qualification had dazzled their eyes; delusion had vanished, shadows satisfied no longer, Newark was restored to its high place in the esteem of the friends of order and good government. Of course the intimates of the days of

his youth were delighted. We want such a man as Gladstone, wrote Hallam to Gaskell (October 1, 1832); 'in some things he is likely to be obstinate and prejudiced; but he has a fine fund of high chivalrous tory sentiment, and a tongue, moreover, to let it loose with. I think he may do a great deal.'

In the course of his three months of sojourn at Newark Mr. Gladstone paid his first visit to the great man at Clumber.

The duke received me, he tells his father, with the greatest kindness, and conversed with such ease and familiarity of manner as speedily to dispel a certain degree of awe which I had previously entertained, and to throw me perhaps more off my guard than I ought to have been in company with a man of his age and rank. . . . The utmost regularity and subordination appears to prevail in the family, and no doubt it is in many respects a good specimen of the old English style. He is apparently a most affectionate father, but still the sons and daughters are under a certain degree of restraint in his presence. . . . A man, be his station of life what it may, more entirely divested of personal pride and arrogance, more single-minded and disinterested in his views, or more courageous and resolute in determination to adhere to them as the dictates of his own conscience, I cannot conceive.

From this frigid interior Mr. Gladstone made his way to the genial company of Milnes Gaskell at Thornes and had a delightful week. Thence he proceeded to spend some days with his sick mother at Leamington. 'We have been singularly dealt with as a family,' he observes, 'once snatched from a position where we were what is called entering society, and sent to comparative seclusion as regards family establishment — and now again prevented from assuming the situation that seems the natural termination of a career like my father's. Here is a noble trial — for me personally to exercise a kindly and unselfish feeling, if amid the excitements and allurements now near me, I am enabled duly to realise the bond of consanguinity and suffer with those whom Providence has ordained to suffer.' And this assuredly was no mere entry in a journal. In betrothals, marriages, deaths, on all the great occasions of life in his circle, his

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letters under old-fashioned formalities of phrase yet beat with a marked and living pulse of genuine interest, solicitude, sympathy, unselfishness, and union.

III

As always, he sought refreshment from turmoil that was only moderately congenial to him, in reading and writing. Among much else he learns Shelley by heart, but his devotion to Wordsworth is unshaken. 'One remarkable similarity prevails between Wordsworth and Shelley; the quality of combining and connecting everywhere external nature with internal and unseen mind. But how different are they in applications. It frets and irritates the one, it is the key to the peacefulness of the other.' Two books of *Paradise Regained*, he finds 'very objectionable on religious grounds,'—the books presumably where Milton has been convicted of Arian heresy. He still has energy enough left for more mundane things, to write a succession of articles for the *Liverpool Standard*, and he finds time to record his joy (December 7) 'over five Eton first classes' at Oxford. Then, by and by, the election accounts come in. The arrangement had been made that the expenses were not to exceed a thousand pounds, of which the duke was to contribute one half, and John Gladstone the other half. It now appeared that twice as much would not suffice. The new member flung himself with all his soul into a struggle with his committee against the practice of opening public houses and the exorbitant demands that came of it. Open houses, he protested, meant profligate expenditure and organised drunkenness; they were not a pecuniary question, but a question of right and wrong. In the afternoon of the second day of polling, his agent had said to him, speaking about special constables, that he scarcely knew how they could be got if wanted, for he thought nearly every man in the town was drunk. It was in vain that the committee assured him of the discouraging truth that a certain proportion of the voters could not be got to the poll without a breakfast; and an observer from another planet might perhaps have asked himself whether all this was so remarkable an improvement on the

duke doing what he liked with his own. Mr. Gladstone still stood to it that a system of entertainment that ended in producing a state of general intoxication, was the most demoralising and vicious of all forms of outlay, and the Newark worthies were bewildered and confounded by the gigantic dialectical and rhetorical resources of their incensed representative. The fierce battle lasted, with moments of mitigation, over many of the thirteen years of the connection. Of all the measures that Mr. Gladstone was destined in days to come to place upon the statute book, none was more salutary than the law that purified corrupt practices at elections.[1]

On his birthday at the close of this eventful year, here is his entry in his diary: — 'On this day I have completed my twenty-third year. . . . The exertions of the year have been smaller than those of the last, but in some respects the diminution has been unavoidable. In future I hope circumstances will bind me down to work with a rigour which my natural sluggishness will find it impossible to elude. I wish that I could hope my frame of mind had been in any degree removed from earth and brought nearer to heaven, that the habit of my mind had been imbued with something of that spirit which is not of this world. I have now familiarised myself with maxims sanctioning and encouraging a degree of intercourse with society, perhaps attended with much risk. . . . Nor do I now think myself warranted in withdrawing from the practices of my fellow men except when they really *involve* an encouragement of sin, in which case I do certainly rank races and theatres. . . .' 'Periods like these,' he writes to his friend Gaskell (January 3, 1833), 'grievous generally in many of their results, are by no means unfavourable to the due growth and progress of individual character. I remember a very wise saying of Archidamus in Thucydides, that the being educated ἐν τοῖς ἀναγκαιοτάτοις brings strength and efficacy to the character.'[2]

In one of his letters to his father at this exciting epoch

[1] Sir Henry James's Act (1883).

[2] Thuc. i. 84, § 7. — 'We should remember that man differs little from man, except that he turns out best who is trained in the sharpest school.'

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Mr. Gladstone says, that before the sudden opening now made for him, what he had marked out for himself was 'a good many years of silent reading and inquiry.' That blessed dream was over; his own temperament and outer circumstances, both of them made its realisation impossible; but in a sense he clung to it all his days. He entered at Lincoln's Inn (January 25), and he dined pretty frequently in hall down to 1839, meeting many old Eton and Oxford acquaintances, more genuine law students than himself. He kept thirteen terms but was never called to the bar. If he had intended to undergo a legal training, the design was ended by Newark. After residing for a short time in lodgings in Jermyn Street, he took quarters at the Albany (March 1833), which remained his London home for six years. 'I am getting on rapidly with my furnishing,' he tells his father, 'and I shall be able, I feel confident, to do it all, including plate, within the liberal limits which you allow. I cannot warmly enough thank you for the terms and footing on which you propose to place me in the chambers, but I really fear that after this year my allowance in all will be greater not only than I have any title to, but than I ought to accept without blushing.' He became a member of the Oxford and Cambridge Club the previous month,[1] and now was 'elected *without* my will (but not more than without it) a member of the Carlton Club.' He would not go to dinner parties on Sundays, not even with Sir Robert Peel. He was closely attentive to the minor duties of social life, if duties they be; he was a strict observer of the etiquette of calls, and on some afternoons he notes that he made a dozen or fourteen of them. He frequented musical parties, where his fine voice, now reasonably well trained, made him a welcome guest, and he goes to public concerts where he finds Pasta and Schröder splendid. His irrepressible desire to expand himself in writing or in speech found a vent in constant articles in the *Liverpool Standard*, neither better nor worse than the ordinary juvenilia of a keen young college

[1] Proposed by Sir R. Inglis and seconded by George Denison, afterwards the militant Archdeacon of Taunton. He was on the committee from 1834 to 1838, and he withdrew from the Club at the end of 1842.

politician. He was confident that, whether estimated by their numbers, their wealth, or their respectability, the conservatives indubitably held in their hands the means and elements of permanent power. He discharges a fusillade from Roman history against the bare idea of vote by ballot, quotes Cicero as its determined enemy, and ascribes to secret suffrage the fall of the republic. He quotes with much zest a sentence from an ultra-radical journal that the life of the West Indian negro is happiness itself compared with that of the poor inmate of our spinning-mills. He scores a good point for the patron of Newark, by an eloquent article on the one man who had laboured to retrieve the miserable condition of the factory children, and ends with a taunting reminder to the reformers that this one man, Sadler,[1] was the nominee of a borough-monger, and that borough-monger the Duke of Newcastle.

It need not be said that his church-going never flagged. In 1840 his friend, the elder Acland, interested himself in forming a small brotherhood, with rules for systematic exercises of devotion and works of mercy. Mr. Gladstone was one of the number. The names were not published, nor did any one but the treasurer know the amounts given. The pledge to personal and active benevolence seems not to have been strongly operative, for at the end of 1845 (Dec. 7) Mr. Gladstone writes to Hope in reference to Acland's scheme: — 'The desire we then both felt passed off, as far as I am concerned, into a plan of asking only a donation and subscription. Now it is very difficult to satisfy the demands of duty to the poor by money alone. On the other hand, it is extremely hard for me — and I suppose possibly for you — to give them much in the shape of time and thought, for both with me are already tasked up to and beyond their powers. . . . I much wish we could execute some plan which without demanding much time would entail the discharge of

[1] Sadler is now not much more than a name, except to students of the history of social reform in England, known to some by a couple of articles of Macaulay's, written in that great man's least worthy and least agreeable style, and by the fact that Macaulay beat him at Leeds in 1832. But he deserves our honourable recollection on the ground mentioned by Mr. Gladstone, as a man of indefatigable and effective zeal in one of the best of causes.

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some humble and humbling office. . . . If you thought with me—and I do not see why you should not, except to assume the reverse is paying myself a compliment — let us go to work, as in the young days of the college plan but with a more direct and less ambitious purpose.' Of this we may see something later. At a great service at St. Paul's, he notes the glory alike of sight and sound as 'possessing that remarkable criterion of the sublime, a grand result from a combination of simple elements.' Edward Irving did not attract; 'a scene pregnant with melancholy instruction.' He was immensely struck by Melvill, whom some of us have heard pronounced by the generation before us to be the most puissant of all the men in his calling. 'His sentiments,' says Mr. Gladstone, 'are manly in tone; he deals powerfully with all his subjects; his language is flowing and unbounded; his imagery varied and intensely strong. Vigorous and lofty as are his conceptions, he is not, I think, less remarkable for soundness and healthiness of mind.' Such a passage shows among other things how the diarist was already teaching himself to analyse the art of oratory. I may note one rather curious habit, no doubt practised with a view to training in the art of speech. Besides listening to as many sermons as possible, he was also for a long time fond of reading them aloud, especially Dr. Arnold's, in rather a peculiar way. 'My plan is,' he says, 'to strengthen or qualify or omit expressions as I go along.'

## IV

In an autobiographical note, written in the late days of his life, when he had become the only commoner left who had sat in the old burned House of Commons, he says: —

I took my seat at the opening of 1833, provided unquestionably with a large stock of schoolboy bashfulness. The first time that business required me to go to the arm of the chair to say something to the Speaker, Manners Sutton — the first of seven whose subject I have been — who was something of a Keate, I remember the revival in me bodily of the frame of mind in which a schoolboy stands before his master. But apart from an incidental

recollection of this kind, I found it most difficult to believe with any reality of belief, that such a poor and insignificant creature as I, could really belong to, really form a *part* of, an assembly which, notwithstanding the prosaic character of its entire visible equipment, I felt to be so august. What I may term its corporeal conveniences were, I may observe in passing, marvellously small. I do not think that in any part of the building it afforded the means of so much as washing the hands. The residences of members were at that time less distant: but they were principally reached on foot. When a large House broke up after a considerable division, a copious dark stream found its way up Parliament Street, Whitehall, and Charing Cross.

I remember that there occurred some case in which a constituent (probably a maltster) at Newark sent me a communication which made oral communication with the treasury, or with the chancellor of the exchequer (then Lord Althorp), convenient. As to the means of bringing this about, I was puzzled and abashed. Some experienced friend on the opposition bench, probably Mr. Goulburn, said to me, There is Lord Althorp sitting alone on the treasury bench, go to him and tell him your business. With such encouragement I did it. Lord Althorp received me in the kindest manner possible, alike to my pleasure and my surprise.

The exact composition of the first reformed House of Commons was usually analysed as tories 144; reformers 395; English and Scotch radicals 76; Irish repealers 43. Mr. Gladstone was for counting the decided conservatives as 160 and reckoning as a separate group a small party who had once been tories and now ranked between conservative opposition and whig ministers. The Irish representatives he divided between 28 tories, and a body of 50 who were made up of ministerialists, conditional repealers, and tithe extinguishers. He heard Joseph Hume, the most effective of the leading radicals, get the first word in the reformed parliament, speaking for an hour and perhaps justifying O'Connell's witty saying that Hume would have been an excellent speaker, if only he would finish a sentence before beginning the next but one after it.

No more diligent member of parliament than Mr. Glad-

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stone ever sat upon the green benches. He read his blue-books, did his duty by election committees, and on the first occasion when, in consequence of staying a little too long at a dinner at the Duke of Hamilton's, he missed a division, his self-reproach was almost as sharp as if he had fallen into mortal sin. This is often enough the way with virtuous young members, but Mr. Gladstone's zealous ideal of parliamentary duty lasted, and both at first and always he was a singular union of deep meditative seriousness with untiring animation, assiduity, and practical energy and force working over a wide field definitely mapped.

In the assembly where he was one day to rank among the most powerful orators ever inscribed upon its golden roll, he first opened his lips in a few words on a Newark petition (April 30) and shortly after (May 21) he spoke two or three minutes on an Edinburgh petition. A little later the question of slavery, where he knew every inch of the ground, brought him to a serious ordeal. In May, Stanley as colonial secretary introduced the proposals of the government for the gradual abolition of colonial slavery. Abolition was to be preceded by an intermediate stage, designated as apprenticeship, to last for twelve years; and the planters were to be helped through the difficulties of the transition by a loan of fifteen millions. In the course of the proceedings, the intermediate period was shortened from twelve years to seven, and the loan of fifteen millions was transformed into a free gift of twenty. To this scheme John Gladstone, whose indomitable energy made him the leading spirit of the West Indian interest, was consistently opposed, and he naturally became the mark of abolitionist attack. The occasion of Mr. Gladstone's first speech was an attack by Lord Howick on the manager of John Gladstone's Demerara estates, whom he denounced as 'the murderer of slaves,'—an attack made without notice to the two sons of the incriminated proprietor sitting in front of him. He declared that the slaves on the Vreedenhoop sugar plantations were systematically worked to death in order to increase the crop. Mr. Gladstone tried in vain to catch the eye of the Chairman on May 30, and the next day he wished to speak

but saw no good opportunity. 'The emotions through which one passes, at least through which I pass, in anticipating such an effort as this, are painful and humiliating. The utter prostration and depression of spirit; the deep sincerity, the burdensome and overpowering reality of the feeling of mere feebleness and incapacity, felt in the inmost heart, yet not to find relief by expression, because the expression of such things goes for affectation,—these things I am unequal to describe, yet I have experienced them now.' On June 3, the chance came. Here is his story of the day: 'Began *le miei Prigioni*. West India meeting of members at one at Lord Sandon's. Resolutions discussed and agreed upon; . . . dined early. Re-arranged my notes for the debate. Rode. House 5 to 1. Spoke my first time, for 50 minutes. My leading desire was to benefit the cause of those who are now so sorely beset. The House heard me very kindly, and my friends were satisfied. Tea afterwards at the Carlton.' The speech was an uncommon success. Stanley, the minister mainly concerned, congratulated him with more than those conventional compliments which the good nature of the House of Commons expects to be paid to any decent beginner. 'I never listened to any speech with greater pleasure,' said Stanley, himself the prince of debaters and then in the most brilliant part of his career; 'the member for Newark argued his case with a temper, an ability, and a fairness which may well be cited as a good model to many older members of this House.' His own leader, though he spoke later, said nothing in his speech about the new recruit, but two days after Mr. Gladstone mentioned that Sir R. Peel came up to him and praised Monday night's affair. King William wrote to Althorp: 'he rejoices that a young member has come forward in so promising a manner, as Viscount Althorp states Mr. W. E. Gladstone to have done.'[1]

Apart from its special vindication in close detail of the state of things at Vreedenhoop as being no worse than others, the points of the speech on this great issue of the time were familiar ones. He confessed with shame and pain that cases of cruelty had existed, and would always

[1] *Memoir of Althorp*, p. 471.

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exist, under the system of slavery, and that this was 'a substantial reason why the British legislature and public should set themselves in good earnest to provide for its extinction.' He admitted, too, that we had not fulfilled our Christian obligations by communicating the inestimable benefits of our religion to the slaves in our colonies, and that the belief among the early English planters, that if you made a man a Christian you could not keep him a slave, had led them to the monstrous conclusion that they ought not to impart Christianity to their slaves. Its extinction was a consummation devoutly to be desired, and in good earnest to be forwarded, but immediate and unconditioned emancipation, without a previous advance in character, must place the negro in a state where he would be his own worst enemy, and so must crown all the wrongs already done to him by cutting off the last hope of rising to a higher level in social existence. At some later period of his life Mr. Gladstone read a corrected report of his first speech, and found its tone much less than satisfactory. 'But of course,' he adds, 'allowance must be made for the enormous and most blessed change of opinion since that day on the subject of negro slavery. I must say, however, that even before this time I had come to entertain little or no confidence in the proceedings of the resident agents in the West Indies.' 'I can now see plainly enough,' he said sixty years later, 'the sad defects, the real illiberalism of my opinions on that subject. Yet they were not illiberal as compared with the ideas of the times, and as declared in parliament in 1833 they obtained the commendation of the liberal leaders.'

It is fair to remember that Pitt, Fox, Grenville, and Grey, while eager to bring the slave trade to an instant end, habitually disclaimed as a calumny any intention of emancipating the blacks on the sugar islands. In 1807, when the foul blot of the trade was abolished, even Wilberforce himself discouraged attempts to abolish slavery, though the noble philanthropist soon advanced to the full length of his own principles. Peel in 1833 would have nothing to do with either immediate emancipation or gradual. Disraeli has put his view on deliberate record that 'the movement of the

middle class for the abolition of slavery was virtuous, but it was not wise. It was an ignorant movement. The history of the abolition of slavery by the English, and its consequences, would be a narrative of ignorance, injustice, blundering, waste, and havoc, not easily paralleled in the history of mankind.'[1]

A week later Lord Howick proposed to move for papers relating to Vreedenhoop. Lord Althorp did not refuse to grant them, but recommended him to drop his motion, as Mr. Gladstone insisted on the equal necessity of a similar return for all neighbouring plantations. Howick withdrew his motion, though he afterwards asserted that ministers had declined the return, which was not true. When Buxton moved to reduce the term of apprenticeship, Mr. Gladstone voted against him. On the following day Stanley, without previous intimation, announced the change from twelve years to seven. 'I spoke a few sentences,' Mr. Gladstone enters in his diary, 'in much confusion: for I could not easily recover from the sensation caused by the sudden overthrow of an entire and undoubting alliance.'

The question of electoral scandals at Liverpool, which naturally excited lively interest in a family with local ties so strong, came up in various forms during the session, and on one of these occasions (July 4) Mr. Gladstone spoke upon it, 'for twenty minutes or more, anything but satisfactorily to myself.' Nor can the speech now be called satisfactory by any one else, except for the enunciation of the sound maxim that the giver of a bribe deserves punishment quite as richly as the receiver. Four days later he spoke for something less than half an hour on the third reading of the Irish Church Reform bill. 'I was heard,' he tells his father, 'with kindness and indulgence, but it is, after all, uphill work to address an assembly so much estranged in feeling from one's self.' Peel's speech was described as temporising, and the deliverance of his young lieutenant was temporising too, though firm on the necessary principle, as he called it, of which the world was before long to hear so much from him, that the nation should be taxed for the support of a national church.

[1] *Lord George Bentinck*, chapter xviii. p. 324.

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Besides his speeches he gave a full number of party votes, some of them interesting enough in view of the vast career before him. I think the first of them all was in the majority of 428 against 40 upon O'Connell's amendment for repeal, — an occasion that came vividly to his memory on the eve of his momentous change of policy in 1886. He voted for the worst clauses of the Irish Coercion bill, including the court-martial clause. He fought steadily against the admission of Jews to parliament. He fought against the admission of dissenters without a test to the universities, which he described as seminaries for the established church. He supported the existing corn law. He said 'No' to the property tax and 'Aye' for retaining the house and window taxes. He resisted a motion of Hume's for the abolition of military and naval sinecures (February 14), and another motion of the same excellent man's for the abolition of all flogging in the army save for mutiny and drunkenness. He voted against the publication of the division lists. He voted with ministers both against shorter parliaments and (April 25) against the ballot, a cardinal reform carried by his own government forty years later. On the other hand he voted (July 5) with Lord Ashley against postponing his beneficent policy of factory legislation; but he did not vote either way a fortnight later when Althorp sensibly reduced the limit of ten hours' work in factories from the impracticable age of eighteen proposed by Ashley, to the age of thirteen. He supported a bill against work on Sundays.

V

A page or two from his diary will carry us succinctly enough over the rest of the first and second years of his parliamentary life.

*July* 21, 1833, *Sunday*. — . . . Wrote some lines and prose also. Finished Strype. Read Abbott and Sumner aloud. Thought for some hours on my own future destiny, and took a solitary walk to and about Kensington Gardens. *July* 23. — Read *L'Allemagne*, *Rape of the Lock*, and finished factory report. *July* 25. — Went to breakfast with old Mr. Wilberforce, introduced by his son. He is cheerful and serene, a beautiful picture of old age in sight of im-

mortality. Heard him pray with his family. Blessing and honour are upon his head. *July* 30. — *L'Allemagne.* Bulwer's England. Parnell. Looked at my Plato. Rode. House. *July* 31. — Hallam breakfasted with me. . . . Committee on West India bill finished. . . . German lesson. *August* 2. — Worked German several hours. Read half of the *Bride of Lammermoor. L'Allemagne.* Rode. House. *August* 3. — German lesson and worked alone. . . . Attended Mr. Wilberforce's funeral; it brought solemn thoughts, particularly about the slaves. This a burdensome question. [German kept up steadily for many days.] *August* 9. — House . . . voted in 48 to 87 against legal tender clause. . . . Read Tasso. *August* 11. — St. James's morning and afternoon. Read Bible. Abbott (finished) and a sermon of Blomfield's aloud. Wrote a paraphrase of part of chapter 8 of Romans. *August* 15. — Committee 1–3¼. Rode. Plato. Finished Tasso, canto 1. Anti-slavery observations on bill. German vocabulary and exercise. *August* 16. — 2¾–3½ Committee finished. German lesson. Finished Plato, *Republic,* bk. v. Preparing to pack. *August* 17. — Started for Aberdeen on board *Queen of Scotland* at 12. *August* 18*th.* — Rose to breakfast, but uneasily. Attempted reading, and read most of Baxter's narrative. Not too unwell to reflect. *August* 19*th.* — Remained in bed. Read Goethe and translated a few lines. Also *Beauties of Shakespere.* In the evening it blew: very ill though in bed. Could not help admiring the crests of the waves even as I stood at cabin window. *August* 20. — Arrived 8½ A.M. — 56½ hours.

His father met him, and in the evening he and his brother found themselves at the new paternal seat. In 1829 John Gladstone, after much negotiation, had bought the estate of Fasque in Kincardineshire for £80,000, to which and to other Scotch affairs he devoted his special and personal attention pretty exclusively. The home at Seaforth was broken up, though relatives remained there or in the neighbourhood. For some time he had a house in Edinburgh for private residence — the centre house in Atholl Crescent. They used for three or four years to come in from Kincardineshire, and spend the winter months in Edinburgh. Fasque was his home for the rest of his days. This was W. E. Gladstone's first visit, followed by at least

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one long annual spell for the remaining eighteen years of his father's life.

On the morning of his arrival, he notes, 'I rode to the mill of Kincairn to see Mackay who was shot last night. He was suffering much and seemed near death. Read the Holy Scriptures to him (Psalms 51, 69, 71, Isaiah 55, Joh. 14, Col. 3). Left my prayer book.' The visit was repeated daily until the poor man's death a week later. Apart from such calls of duty, books are his main interest. He is greatly delighted with Hamilton's *Men and Manners in America*. Alfieri's *Antigone* he dislikes as having the faults of both ancient and modern drama. He grinds away through Gifford's *Pitt*, and reads Hallam's *Middle Ages*. 'My method has usually been, 1, to read over regularly; 2, to glance again over all I have read, and analyse.' He was just as little of the lounger in his lighter reading. Schiller's plays he went through with attention, finding it 'a good plan to read along with history, historical plays of the same events for material illustration, as well as aid to the memory.' He read Scott's chapters on Mary Stuart in his history of Scotland, 'to enable me better to appreciate the admirable judgment of Schiller (in *Maria Stuart*) both where he has adhered to history and where he has gone beyond it.' He finds fault with the *Temistocle* of Metastasio, as 'too humane.' 'History should not be violated without a reason. It may be set aside to fill up poetical verisimilitude. If history assigns a cause inadequate to its effect, or an effect inadequate to its cause, poetry may supply the deficiency for the sake of an impressive whole. But it is too much to overset a narrative and call it a historical play.' Then came a tragic stroke in real life.

*October* 6, 1833. — Post hour to-day brought me a melancholy announcement — the death of Arthur Hallam. This intelligence was deeply oppressive even to my selfish disposition. I mourn in him, for myself, my earliest near friend; for my fellow creatures, one who would have adorned his age and country, a mind full of beauty and of power, attaining almost to that ideal standard of which it is presumption to expect an example. When shall I see his like? Yet this dispensation is not all pain, for there is a hope

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and not (in my mind) a bare or rash hope that his soul rests with God in Jesus Christ. . . . I walked upon the hills to muse upon this very mournful event, which cuts me to the heart. Alas for his family and his intended bride. *October 7th.* — My usual occupations, but not without many thoughts upon my departed friend. Bible. Alfieri, *Wallenstein*, Plato, Gifford's *Pitt*, *Biographia Literaria*. Rode with my father and Helen. All objects lay deep in the softness and solemnity of autumnal decay. Alas, my poor friend was cut off in the spring of his bright existence.

*December* 13, *Edinburgh.* — Breakfast with Dr. Chalmers. His modesty is so extreme that it is oppressive to those who are in his company, especially his juniors, since it is impossible for them to keep their behaviour in due proportion to his. He was on his own subject, the Poor Laws, very eloquent, earnest, and impressive. Perhaps he may have been hasty in applying maxims drawn from Scotland to a more advanced stage of society in England. *December* 17. — Robertson's *Charles V.*, Plato, began book 10. Chalmers. Singing-lesson and practice. Whist. Walked on the Glasgow road, first milestone to fourth and back in 70 minutes — the returning three miles in about 33¾. Ground in some places rather muddy and slippery. *December* 26. — A feeble day. Three successive callers and conversation with my father occupied the morning. Read a good allowance of Robertson, an historian *who leads his reader on*, I think, more pleasantly than any I know. The style most attractive, but the mind of the writer does not set forth the loftiest principles. *December 29th, Sunday.* — Twenty-four years have I lived. . . . Where is the *continuous* work which ought to fill up the life of a Christian without intermission? . . . I have been growing, that is certain; in good or evil? Much fluctuation; often a supposed progress, terminating in finding myself at, or short of, the point which I deemed I had left behind me. Business and political excitement a tremendous trial, not so much alleviating as forcibly dragging down the soul from that temper which is fit to inhale the air of heaven. *Jan.* 8, 1834, *Edinburgh.* — Breakfast with Dr. Chalmers. Attended his lecture 2–3. . . . More than ever struck with the superabundance of Dr. C.'s gorgeous language, which leads him into repetitions, until the stores of our tongue be exhausted on each particular point. Yet the variety and magnifi-

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cence of his expositions must fix them very strongly in the minds of his hearers. In ordinary works great attention would be excited by the very infrequent occurrence of the very brilliant expressions and illustrations with which he cloys the palate. His gems lie like paving stones. He does indeed seem to be an *admirable* man.

Of Edinburgh his knowledge soon became intimate. His father and mother took him to that city, as we have seen, in 1814. He spent a spring there in 1828 just before going to Oxford, and he recollected to the end of his life a sermon of Dr. Andrew Thomson's on the Repentance of Judas, 'a great and striking subject.' Some circumstance or another brought him into relations with Chalmers, that ripened into friendship. 'We used to have walks together,' Mr. Gladstone remembered, 'chiefly out of the town by the Dean Bridge and along the Queensferry road. On one of our walks together, Chalmers took me down to see one of his districts by the water of Leith, and I remember we went into one or more of the cottages. He went in with smiling countenance, greeting and being greeted by the people, and sat down. But he had nothing to say. He was exactly like the Duke of Wellington, who said of himself that he had no small talk. His whole mind was always full of some great subject and he could not deviate from it. He sat smiling among the people, but he had no small talk for them and they had no large talk. So after some time we came away, he pleased to have been with the people, and they proud to have had the Doctor with them.'[1] For Chalmers he never lost a warm appreciation, often expressed in admirable words — 'one of nature's nobles; his warrior grandeur, his rich and glowing eloquence, his absorbed and absorbing earnestness, above all his singular simplicity and detachment from the world.' Among other memories, 'There was a quaint old shop at the Bowhead which used to interest me very much. It was kept by a bookseller, Mr. Thomas Nelson. I remember being amused by a reply he made to me one day when I went in and asked for Booth's *Reign of Grace*. He half turned his head towards

[1] Report of an interview with Mr. Gladstone in 1890, in *Scottish Liberal*, May 2, 9, etc., 1890.

me, and remarked with a peculiar twinkle in his eye, "Ay, man, but ye're a young chiel to be askin' after a book like that."'

On his way south in January 1834, Mr. Gladstone stays with relatives at Seaforth, 'where even the wind howling upon the window at night was dear and familiar;' and a few days later finds himself once more within the ever congenial walls of Oxford.

*January* 19, *Sunday.* — Read the first lesson in morning chapel. A most masterly sermon of Pusey's preached by Clarke. Lancaster in the afternoon on the Sacrament. Good walk. Wrote [family letters]. Read Whyte. Three of Girdlestone's Sermons. Pickering on adult baptism (some clever and singularly insufficient reasoning). Episcopal pastoral letter for 1832. Doane's Ordination sermon, 1833, admirable, — Wrote some thoughts. *Jan.* 20. — Sismondi's *Italian Republics.* Dined at Merton, and spent all the evening there in interesting conversation. I was Hamilton's guest [afterwards Bishop of Salisbury]. It was delightful, it wrings joy even from the most unfeeling heart, to see religion on the increase as it is here. *Jan. 23rd.* — Much of to-day, it fell out, spent in conversation of an interesting kind, with Brandreth and Pearson on eternal punishment; with Williams on baptism; with Churton on faith and religion in the university; with Harrison on prophecy and the papacy. . . . *Jan.* 24. — Began *Essay on Saving Faith,* and wrote thereon. *Jan. 29th.* — Dined at Oriel. Conversation with Newman chiefly on church matters. . . . I excuse some idleness to myself by the fear of doing some real injury to my eyes. [After a flight of three or four days to London, he again returns for a Sunday in Oxford.] *Feb.* 9. — Two university sermons and St. Peter's. Round the meadows with Williams. Dined with him, common room. Tea and a pleasant conversation with Harrison. Began *Chrysostom de Sacerdotio,* and Cecil's *Friendly Visit.* [Then he goes back to town for the rest of the session.] *Feb.* 12, *London.* — Finished *Friendly Visit,* beautiful little book. Finished Tennyson's poems. Wrote a paper on ἠθικὴ πίστις in poetry. Recollections of Robert Hall. *13th.* — With Doyle, long and solemn conversation on the doctrine of the Trinity. . . . Began Wardlaw's

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*Christian Ethics. 26th, London.* — A busy day, yet of little palpable profit. . . . Read two important Demerara papers. . . . Rode. At the levee. House 5½–11. Wished to speak, but deterred by the extremely ill disposition to hear. Much sickened by their unfairness in the judicial character, more still at my own wretched feebleness and fears. *April* 1. — Dined at Sir R. Peel's. Herries, Sir G. Murray, Chantrey, etc. Sir R. Peel very kind in his manner to us. *May* 29. — Mignet's *Introduction* [to 'the History of the Spanish succession,' one of the masterpieces of historical literature]. *June* 4. — Bruce to breakfast. Paper. Mignet and analysis. Burke. Harvey committee.[1] Ancient music concert. Dined at Lincoln's Inn. House 11¼–12¾. Rode. *June* 6. — *Paradise Lost.* Began Leibnitz's *Tentamina Theodiceæ.* *June* 11. — Read Pitt's speeches on the Union in January, 1799, and Grattan on Catholic petition in 1805. *15th.* — Read some passages in the latter part of *Corinne,* which always work strongly on me. *18th.* — Coming home to dine, found *Remains of A. H. H.* Yesterday a bridal at a friend's, to-day a sad memorial of death. 'Tis a sad subject, a very sad one to me. I have not seen his like. The memory of him reposes gently in my inmost heart, a fountain of tears which soften and fertilise it in the midst of pursuits whose tendency is to dry up the sources of emotion by the fever of excitement. I read his memoir. His father had done me much and undeserved kindness there. *20th.* — Most of my time went in thinking confusedly over the university question. Very anxious to speak, tortured with nervous anticipations; could not get an opportunity. Certainly my inward experience on these occasions ought to make me humble. Herbert's maiden speech very successful. I ought to be thankful for my *miss;* perhaps also because my mind was so much oppressed that I could not, I fear, have unfolded my inward convictions. What a world it is, and how does it require the Divine power and aid to clothe in words the profound and

[1] Daniel Whittle Harvey was an eloquent member of parliament whom the benchers of his inn refused to call to the bar, on the ground of certain charges against his probity. The House appointed a committee of which Mr. Gladstone was a member to inquire into these charges. O'Connell was chairman, and they acquitted Harvey, without however affecting the decision of the benchers. Mr. Gladstone was the only member of the committee who did not concur in its final judgment. See his article on Daniel O'Connell in the *Nineteenth Century,* Jan. 1889.

mysterious thoughts on those subjects most connected with the human soul — thoughts which the mind does not command as a mistress, but entertains reverentially as honoured guests . . . content with only a partial comprehension, hoping to render it a progressive one, but how difficult to define in words a conception, many of whose parts are still in a nascent state with no fixed outline or palpable substance. *July* 2. — . . . Guizot. Cousin. Bossuet (*Hist. Univ.*). Rode. Committee and House. Curious detail from O'Connell of his interview with Littleton. 10*th*. — 7¼ A.M.–7½ in an open chaise to Coggeshall and back with O'Connell and Sir G. Sinclair, to examine Skingley [a proceeding arising from the Harvey committee], which was done with little success.

The conversation of the great Liberator was never wholly forgotten, and it was probably his earliest chance of a glimpse of the Irish point of view at first hand.

*July* 11. — No news till the afternoon and then heard on very good authority that the Grey government is definitely broken up, and that attempts at reconstruction have failed. Cousin, Sismondi, Education evidence. Letters. House. 21*st*. — To-day not for the first time felt a great want of courage to express feelings strongly awakened on hearing a speech of O'Connell. To have so strong an impulse and not obey it seems unnatural; it seems like an inflicted dumbness. 28*th*. — Spoke 30 to 35 minutes on University bill, with more ease than I had hoped, having been more mindful or less unmindful of Divine aid. Divided in 75 v. 164. [To his father next day.] You will see by your *Post* that I held forth last night on the Universities bill. The House I am glad to say heard me with the utmost kindness, for they had been listening previously to an Indian discussion in which very few people took any interest, though indeed it was both curious and interesting. But the change of subject was no doubt felt as a relief, and their disposition to listen set me infinitely more at my ease than I should otherwise have been. 29*th*. — Pleasant house dinner at Carlton. Lincoln got up the party. Sir R. Peel was in good spirits and very agreeable.

It was on this occasion that he wrote to his mother, — 'Sir

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Robert Peel caused me much gratification by the way in which he spoke to me of my speech, and particularly the great warmth of his manner. He told me he cheered me loudly, and I said in return that I had heard his voice under me while speaking, and was much encouraged thereby.' He ends the note already cited (Sept. 6, 1897) on the old House of Commons, which was burned down this year, with what he calls a curious incident concerning Sir Robert Peel, and with a sentence or two upon the government of Lord Grey : —

Cobbett made a motion alike wordy and absurd, praying the king to remove him [Peel] from the privy council as the author of the act for the re-establishment of the gold standard in 1819. The entire House was against him, except his colleague Fielden of Oldham, who made a second teller.[1] After the division I think Lord Althorp at once rose and moved the expunction of the proceedings from the votes or journals; a severe rebuke to the mover. Sir Robert in his speech said, 'I am at a loss, sir, to conceive what can be the cause of the strong hostility to me which the honourable gentleman exhibits. *I* never conferred on him an obligation.' This stroke was not original. But what struck me at the time as singular was this, that notwithstanding the state of feeling which I have described, Sir R. Peel was greatly excited in dealing with one who at the time was little more than a contemptible antagonist. At that period shirt collars were made with 'gills' which came up upon the cheek; and Peel's gills were so soaked with perspiration that they actually lay down upon his neck-cloth.

In one of these years, I think 1833, a motion was made by some political economist for the abolition of the corn laws. I (an absolute and literal ignoramus) was much struck and staggered with it. But Sir James Graham — who knew more of economic and trade matters, I think, than the rest of the cabinet of 1841 all put together — made a reply in the sense of protection, whether high or low I cannot now say. But I remember perfectly well that this speech of his built me up again for the moment and enabled me (I believe) to vote with the government.

[1] See Cobbett's *Life* by Edward Smith, ii. p. 287. Attwood of Birmingham seems to have voted for the motion.

The year 1833 was, as measured by quantity and in part by quality, a splendid year of legislation. In 1834 the Government and Lord Althorp far beyond all others did themselves high honour by the new Poor Law Act, which rescued the English peasantry from the total loss of their independence. Of the 658 members of Parliament about 480 must have been their general supporters. Much gratitude ought to have been felt for this great administration. But from a variety of causes, at the close of the session 1834 the House of Commons had fallen into a state of cold indifference about it.

He was himself destined one day to feel how soon parliamentary reaction may follow a sweeping popular triumph.

## CHAPTER II

### THE NEW CONSERVATISM AND OFFICE

*(1834–1845)*

I CONSIDER the Reform bill a final and irrevocable settlement of a great constitutional question. . . . If by adopting the spirit of the Reform bill it be meant that we are to live in a perpetual vortex of agitation; that public men can only support themselves in public estimation by adopting every popular impression of the day, by promising the instant redress of anything that anybody may call an abuse . . . I will not undertake to adopt it. But if the spirit of the Reform bill implies merely a careful review of institutions civil and ecclesiastical, undertaken in a friendly temper, the correction of proved abuses and the redress of real grievances, then, etc. etc. — PEEL (*Tamworth Address*).

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THE autumn of 1834 was spent at Fasque. An observant eye followed political affairs, but hardly a word is said about them in the diary. A stiff battle was kept up against electioneering iniquities at Newark. Riding, boating, shooting were Mr. Gladstone's pastimes in the day; billiards, singing, backgammon, and a rubber in the evening. Sport was not without compunction which might well, in an age that counts itself humane, be expected to come oftener. 'Had to kill a wounded partridge,' he records, 'and felt after it as if I had shot the albatross. It might be said: This should be more or less.' And that was true. He was always a great walker. He walked from Montrose, some thirteen or fourteen miles off, in two hours and three quarters, and another time he does six miles in seventy minutes. Nor does he ever walk with an unobserving mind. At Lochnagar: 'Saw Highland women from Strathspey coming down for harvest with heavy loads, some with babies, over these wild rough paths through wind and storm. Ah, with what labour does a large portion of mankind subsist, while we fare

sumptuously every day!' This was the ready susceptibility to humane impression in the common circumstance of life, the eye stirring the emotions of the feeling heart, that nourished in him the soul of true oratory, to say nothing of feeding the roots of statesmanship. His bookmindedness is unabated. He began with a resolution to work at least two hours every morning before breakfast, and the resolution seems to have been manfully kept, without prejudice to systematic reading for a good many hours of the day besides. For the first time, rather strange to say, he read St. Augustine's *Confessions*, and with the delight that might have been expected. He finds in that famous composition 'a good deal of prolix and fanciful, though acute speculation, but the practical parts of the book have a wonderful force, and inimitable sweetness and simplicity.' In other departments of religion, he read Archbishop Leighton's life and Hannah More's, Arnold's Sermons and Milner's *Church History* and Whewell's *Bridgewater Treatise*. Once more he analyses the *Novum Organum* and the *Advancement of Learning*, and he reads or re-reads Locke's *Essay*. He studies political science in the two great manuals of the old world and the new, in the *Politics* of Aristotle and the *Prince* of Machiavelli. He goes through three or four plays of Schiller; also Manzoni, and Petrarch, and Dante at the patient rate of a couple of cantos a day; then Boccaccio, from whom, after a half-dozen of the days, he willingly parts company, only interested in him as showing a strange state of manners and how religion can be dissociated from conduct. In modern politics he reads the memoirs of Chatham, and Brougham on Colonial Policy, of which he says that 'eccentricity, paradox, fast and loose reasoning and (much more) sentiment, appear to have entered most deeply into the essence of this remarkable man when he wrote his Colonial Policy, as now; with the rarest power of *expressing* his thoughts, has he any fixed law to guide them?' On Roscoe's *Leo X.* he remarks how interesting and highly agreeable it is in style, and while disclaiming any right to judge its fidelity and research, makes the odd observation that it has in some degree subdued the leaven of its author's unitarianism. He

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writes occasional verses, including the completion of 'some stanzas of December 1832 on "The Human Heart," but I am not impudent enough to call them by that name.'

In the midst of days well filled by warm home feeling, reasonable pleasure, and vigorous animation of intellect came the summons to action. On November 18, a guest arrived with the astonishing news that ministers were out. The king had dismissed the Melbourne government, partly because he did not believe that Lord John Russell could take the place of Althorp as leader of the Commons, partly because like many cleverer judges he was sick of them, and partly because, as is perhaps the case with more cabinets than the world supposes, the ministers were sick of one another, and King William knew it. Mr. Gladstone in 1875[1] described the dismissal of the whigs in 1834 as the indiscreet proceeding of an honest and well-meaning man, which gave the conservatives a momentary tenure of office without power, but provoked a strong reaction in favour of the liberals, and greatly prolonged the predominance which they were on the point of losing through the play of natural causes.[2] Sir Robert Peel was summoned in hot haste from Rome, and after a journey of twelve days over alpine snows, eight nights out of the twelve in a carriage, on December 9 he reached London, saw the king and kissed hands as first lord of the treasury. Less than two years before, he had said, 'I feel that between me and office there is a wider gulf than there is perhaps between it and any other man in the House.'

Mr. Gladstone meanwhile at Fasque worked off some of his natural excitement which he notes as invading even Sundays, by the composition of a political tract. The tract has disappeared down the gulf of time. December 11 was his father's seventieth birthday, 'his strength and energy wonderful and giving promise of many more.' Within the week the fated message from the new prime

[1] *Gleanings*, i. p. 38.

[2] In another place he describes it as an action done 'with no sort of reason' (*Ib.* p. 78). But the Melbourne papers, published in 1890, pp. 219–221 and 225, indicate that Melbourne had spontaneously given the king good reasons for cashiering him and his colleagues.

minister arrived; the case is apt to quicken the pulse of even the most serene of politicians, and we may be sure that Mr. Gladstone with the keen vigour of five-and-twenty tingling in his veins was something more or less than serene.

*Dec.* 17. — Locke, and Russell's *Modern Europe* in the morning. Went to meet the post, found a letter from Peel desiring to see me, dated 13th. All haste; ready by 4 — no place! Reluctantly deferred till the morning. Wrote to Lincoln, Sir R. Peel, etc. . . . A game of whist. This is a serious call. I got my father's advice to take anything with work and responsibility. 18*th.* — Off at 7.40 by mail. I find it a privation to be unable to read in a coach. The mind is distracted through the senses, and rambles. Nowhere is it to me so incapable of continuous thought. . . . Newcastle at 9¼ P.M. 19*th.* — Same again. At York at 6¼ A.M. to 7. Ran to peep at the minster and bore away a faint twilight image of its grandeur. 20*th.* — Arrived safe, thank God, and well at the Bull and Mouth 5¾ A.M. Albany soon. To bed for 2¼ hours. Went to Peel about eleven.

He writes to his father the same day —

My interview with him was not more than six or eight minutes, but he was *extremely* kind. He told me his letter to me was among his first; that he was prompted only by his own feelings towards me and some more of that kind; that I might have a seat either at the admiralty or treasury boards, but the latter was that which he intended for me; that I should then be in immediate and confidential communication with himself; and should thereby have more insight into the general concerns of government; that there was a person very anxious for the seat at the treasury, who would go to the admiralty if I did not; but that he meant to go upon the principle of putting every one to the post for which he thought them most fit, so far as he could, and therefore preferred the arrangement he had named. As he distinctly preferred the treasury for me, and assigned such reasons for the preference, it appeared to me that the question was quite settled, and I immediately closed with his offer. I expressed my gratitude for the opinions of me which he had expressed; and said I thought it my duty to mention that the question of my re-election at Newark upon a single

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vacancy had never been put to my friends, and I asked whether I should consider any part of what he had said as contingent upon the answer I might receive from them. He said no, that he would willingly take that risk. At first, he thought I had suspicions about the Duke of Newcastle, and assured me that he would be much pleased, of which I said I felt quite persuaded. This inquiry, however, served the double purpose of discharging my own duty, and drawing out something about the dissolution. He said to me, 'You will address your constituents upon vacating your seat, and acquaint them of your intention to solicit a renewal of their confidence whenever they are called upon to exercise their franchise, *which I tell you confidentially*,' he added, 'will be very soon.' I would have given a hundred pounds to be then and there in a position to express my hopes and fears! But it is, then, you see *certain* that we are to have it, and that they will not meet the present parliament. Most bitterly do I lament it.

Mr. Gladstone at a later date (July 25, 1835) recorded that he had reason to believe from a conversation with a tory friend who was in many party secrets, that the Duke of Wellington set their candidates in motion all over the country before Sir Robert's return. Active measures, and of course expense, had so generally begun, so much impatience for the dissolution had been excited, and the anticipations had been permitted for so long a time to continue and to spread, as to preclude the possibility of delay.[1]

The appointment of the young member for Newark was noted at the time as an innovation upon a semi-sacred social usage. Sir Robert Inglis said to him, 'You are about the youngest lord who was ever placed at the treasury on his own account, and not because he was his father's son.' The prime minister, no doubt, rejoiced in finding for the public service a young man of this high promise, sprung out of the same class, and bred in the same academic

[1] Lord Palmerston doubted (Nov. 25, 1834) whether Peel would dissolve. 'I think his own bias will rather be to abide by the decision of this House of Commons, and try to propitiate it by great professions of reform. The effect of a dissolution must be injurious to the principles that he professes. . . . But he may be overborne by the violent people of his own party whom he will not be able to control.' Ashley's *Life of Palmerston* (1879), i. p. 313.

traditions as his own.[1] The youthful minister's path was happily smoothed at Newark. This time blues and reds called a grand truce, divided the honours, and returned Mr. Gladstone and Sergeant Wilde without a contest. The question that excited most interest in the canvass was the new poor law. Mr. Gladstone gave the fallen ministers full credit for their measure. Most of their bills, he said, were projected from a mere craving for popularity, but in the case of the poor law they acted in defiance of the public press and many of their own friends. On the other hand, he defended the new government as the government of a truly reforming party, pointing to the commercial changes made by Lord Liverpool's administration, to the corporation and test Acts, and to catholic emancipation. Who could deny that these were changes of magnitude settled in peaceful times by a parliament unreformed? Who could deny that Sir Robert Peel had long been a practical reformer of the law, and that the Duke of Wellington had carried out great retrenchments? Let them then rally round throne and altar, and resist the wild measures of the destructives. The red hero was drawn through the town by six greys, with postilions in silk jackets, amid the music of bands, the clash of bells, and the cheers of the crowd. When the red procession met the blue, mutual congratulations took the place of the old insult and defiance, and at five o'clock each party sat down to its own feast. The reds drank toasts of a spirited, loyal, and constitutional character, many admirable speeches were made which the chronicler regrets that his limits will not allow him to report, — regrets unshared by us, — and soon after eleven Mr. Gladstone escaped. After a day at Clumber, he was speedily on his way to London. 'Off at $10\frac{1}{2}$ P.M. Missed the High Flyer at Tuxford, broke down in my chaise on the way to Newark; no injury, thanks to God. Remained $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours alone; overtaken by the Wellington at $3\frac{1}{2}$ A.M.

[1] Greville, on the other hand, grumbled at Peel, for taking high birth and connections as substitutes for other qualities, because he made Sidney Herbert secretary at the board of control, instead of making him a lord of the treasury, and sending 'Gladstone, who is a very clever man,' to the other and more responsible post.

BOOK II. 1835.

Arrived in London (Jan. 8) before 8 P.M. Good travelling.' On reckoning up his movements he finds that, though not at all fond of travelling for the sake of going from place to place, he has had in 1834 quite 2400 miles of it.

Before the dissolution, Sir H. Hardinge had told him that the conservatives would not be over 340 nor under 300, but by the middle of the month things looked less prosperous. The reaction against the whigs had not yet reached full flood, the royal dismissal of the administration was unpopular, moderate people more especially in Scotland could not stand a government where the Duke of Wellington, the symbol of a benighted and stubborn toryism, was seen over Peel's shoulder. 'At present,' Mr. Gladstone writes, 'the case is, even in my view, hopeful; in that of most here it is more. And certainly, to have this very privilege of entertaining a deliberate and reasonable hope, to think that notwithstanding the ten pound clause, a moderate parliament may be returned; in fine, to believe that we have now *some* prospect of surviving the Reform bill without a bloody revolution, is to me as surprising as delightful; it seems to me the greatest and most providential mercy with which a nation was ever visited. . . . To-day I am going to dine with the lord chancellor [Lyndhurst], having received a card to that effect last night.'

It was at this dinner that Mr. Gladstone had his first opportunity of making a remarkable acquaintance. In his diary he mentions as present three of the judges, the flower of the bench, as he supposes, but he says not a word of the man of the strangest destiny there, the author of *Vivian Grey*. Disraeli himself, in a letter to his sister, names 'young Gladstone,' and others, but condemns the feast as rather dull, and declares that a swan very white and tender, and stuffed with truffles, was the best company at the table. What Mr. Gladstone carried away in his memory was a sage lesson of Lyndhurst's, by which the two men of genius at his table were in time to show themselves extremely competent to profit, — 'Never defend yourself before a popular assemblage, except with and by

retorting the attack; the hearers, in the pleasure which the assault gives them, will forget the previous charge.' As Disraeli himself put it afterwards, *Never complain and never explain.*

## II

One afternoon, a few days later, while he was grappling at the treasury with a file of papers on the mysteries of superannuation, Mr. Gladstone was again summoned by the prime minister, and again (Jan. 26) he writes to his father: —

I have had an important interview with Sir R. Peel, the result of which is that I am to be under-secretary for the colonies. I will give you a hurried and imperfect sketch of the conversation. He began by saying he was about to make a great sacrifice both of his own feelings and convenience, but that what he had to say he hoped would be gratifying to me, as a mark of his confidence and regard. 'I am going to propose to you, Gladstone, that you should be, for you know Wortley has lost his election, under-secretary of state for the colonies, and I give you my word that I do not know six offices which are at this moment of greater importance than that to which is attached the representation of the colonial department in the House of Commons, at a period when so many questions of importance are in agitation.' I expressed as well as I could, and indeed it was but ill, my unfeigned and deep sense of his kindness, my hesitation to form any opinion of my own competency for the office, and at the same time my general desire not to shrink from any responsibility which he might think proper to lay upon me. He said that was the right and manly view to take. . . . He adverted to my connection with the West Indies as likely to give satisfaction to persons dependent on those colonies, and thought that others would not be displeased. In short, I cannot go through it all, but I can only say that if I had always heard of him that he was the warmest and freest person of all living in the expression of his feelings, such description would have been fully borne out by his demeanour to me. When I came away he took my hand and said, '*Well, God bless you, wherever you are.*'

BOOK II.

1835.

From Sir Robert the new under-secretary made his way, in fear and trembling, to his new chief, Lord Aberdeen.

Distinction of itself naturally and properly rather alarms the young. I had heard of his high character; but I had also heard of him as a man of cold manners, and close and even haughty reserve. It was dark when I entered his room, so that I saw his figure rather than his countenance. I do not recollect the matter of the conversation, but I well remember that, before I had been three minutes with him, all my apprehensions had melted away like snow in the sun. I came away from that interview conscious indeed of his dignity, but of a dignity so tempered by a peculiar purity and gentleness, and so associated with impressions of his kindness and even friendship, that I believe I thought more about the wonder of his being at that time so misunderstood by the outer world, than about the new duties and responsibilities of my office.[1]

Time only deepened these impressions. It is not hard for a great party chief to win the affection and regard of his junior colleague, and where good fortune has brought together a congenial pair, no friendship outside the home can be more valuable, more delightful, alike to veteran and to tiro. Of all the host of famous or considerable men with whom he was to come into official and other relations, none ever, as we shall see, held the peculiar place in Mr. Gladstone's esteem and reverence of the two statesmen under whose auspices he now first entered the enchanted circle of public office. The promotion was a remarkable stride. He was only five-and-twenty, his parliamentary existence had barely covered two years, and he was wholly without powerful family connection. 'You are aware,' Peel wrote to John Gladstone, 'of the sacrifice I have made of personal feeling to public duty, in placing your son in one of the most important offices — that of representative of the colonial department in the House of Commons, and thus relinquishing his valuable aid in my own immediate department. Wherever he may be placed, he is sure to distinguish himself.'[2]

[1] Lord Stanmore's *Earl of Aberdeen* (1893), p. iii.
[2] Parker's *Peel*, ii. p. 267.

III



Mr. Gladstone's first spell of office was little more than momentary. The liberal majority, as has so often happened, was composite, but Peel can hardly have supposed that the sections of which it was made up would fail to coalesce, and coalesce pretty soon, for the irresistible object of ejecting ministers who were liked by none of them, and through whose repulse they could strike an avenging blow against the king. Ardent subalterns like Mr. Gladstone took more vehement views. The majority at once beat the government (supported by the group of Stanleyites, fifty-three strong) in the contest for the Speaker's chair. Other repulses followed. 'The division,' writes Mr. Gladstone to his father, with the honourable warmth of the young party man, 'I need not say was a disappointment to me; but it must have been much more so to those who have ever thought well of the parliament. Our party mustered splendidly. Some few, but very, very few, of the others appear to have kept away through a sense of decency; they had not virtue enough to vote for the man whom they knew to be incomparably the best, and against whom they had no charge to bring. No more shameful act I think has been done by a British House of Commons.'

Not many days after fervently deprecating a general resignation, an ill-omened purpose of this very course actually flitted across the mind of the young under-secretary himself. A scheme was on the anvil for the education of the blacks in the West Indies, and a sudden apprehension startled Mr. Gladstone, that his chief might devote public funds to all varieties of denominational religious teaching. Any plan of that kind would be utterly opposed to what with him, as we shall soon discover, was then a fundamental principle of national polity. Happily the fatal leap was not needed, but if either small men like the government whips, or great men like Peel and Aberdeen, could have known what was passing, they would have shaken grave heads over this spirit of unseasonable scruple at the very start of the race in a brilliant man with all his life before him.

BOOK II. 1835.

*Feb.* 4 *or* 5. — Charles Canning told me Peel had offered him the vacant lordship of the treasury, through his mother. They were, he said, very much gratified with the manner in which it had been done, though the offer was declined, upon the ground stated in the reply, that though he did not anticipate any discrepancy in political sentiments to separate him from the present government, yet he should prefer in some sense deserving an official station by parliamentary conduct. . . . Peel's letter was written at some length, very friendly, without any statesmanlike reserve or sensitive attention to nicety of style. In the last paragraph it spoke with amiable embarrassment of Mr. Canning; stating that his 'respect, regard, and admiration' (I think even), apparently interrupted by circumstances, continued fresh and vivid, and that those very circumstances made him more desirous of thus publicly testifying his real sentiments.

*March* 30. — Wished to speak on Irish church. No opportunity. Wrote on it. A noble-minded speech from Sir J. Graham. *March* 31. — Spoke on the Irish church — under forty minutes. I cannot help here recording that this matter of speaking is really my strongest religious exercise. On all occasions, and to-day especially, was forced upon me the humiliating sense of my inability to exercise my reason in the face of the H. of C., and of the necessity of my utterly failing, unless God gave me the strength and language. It was after all a poor performance, but would have been poorer had He never been in my thoughts as a present and powerful aid. But this is what I am as yet totally incompetent to effect — to realise, in speaking, anything, however small, which at all satisfies my mind. Debating seems to me less difficult, though unattained. But to hold in serene contemplative action the mental faculties in the turbid excitement of debate, so as to see truth clearly and set it forth such as it is, this I cannot attain to.

As regards my speech in the Irish church debate, he tells his father (April 2), it was received by the House, and has been estimated, in a manner extremely gratifying to me. As regards satisfaction to myself in the manner of its execution, I cannot say so much. Backed by a numerous and warm-hearted party, and strong in the consciousness of a good cause, I did not

find it difficult to grapple with the more popular parts of the question; but I fell miserably short of my desires in touching upon the principles which the discussion involved, and I am sure that it must be long before I am enabled in any reasonable sense to be a speaker according even to the conception which I have formed in my own mind.

A few days later, he received the congratulations of a royal personage: —

In the evening, dining at Lord Salisbury's, I was introduced to the Duke of Cumberland, who was pleased to express himself favourably of my speech. He is fond of conversation, and the common reputation which he bears of including in his conversation many oaths, appears to be but too true. Yet he said he had made a point of sending his son to George the Fourth's funeral, thinking it an excellent advantage for a boy to receive the impression which such a scene was calculated to convey. The duke made many acute remarks, and was, I should say, most remarkably unaffected and kind. These are fine social qualities for a prince, though, of course, not the most important — 'My dear Sir,' and thumps on the shoulder after a ten minutes' acquaintance. He spoke broadly and freely — much on the disappearance of the bishops' wigs, which he said had done more harm to the church than anything else!

On the same night the catastrophe happened. After a protracted and complex struggle Lord John Russell's proposal for the appropriation of the surplus revenues of the Irish church was carried against ministers. The following day Peel announced his resignation.

Though his official work had been unimportant, Mr. Gladstone had left an excellent impression behind him among the permanent men. When he first appeared in the office, Henry Taylor said, 'I rather like Gladstone, but he is said to have more of the devil in him than appears.' A few weeks were enough to show him that 'Gladstone was far the most considerable of the rising generation, having besides his abilities an excellent disposition and great strength of character.' James Stephen thought well of him, but doubted if he had pugnacity enough for public life.

BOOK II.

A few days later Mr. Gladstone dined with an official party at the fallen minister's: —

1835.

Sir R. Peel made a very nice speech on Lincoln's proposing and our drinking his health. The following is a slight and bad sketch: — 'I really can hardly call you gentlemen alone. I would rather address you as my warm and attached friends in whom I have the fullest confidence, and with whom it has afforded me the greatest satisfaction to be associated during the struggle which has just been brought to a close. In undertaking the government, from the first I have never expected to succeed; still it was my conviction that good might be done, and I trust that good has been effected. I believe we have shown that even if a conservative government be not strong enough to carry on the public affairs of this country, at least we are so strong that we ought to be able to prevent any other government from doing any serious mischief to its institutions. We meet now as we met at the beginning of the session, then perhaps in somewhat finer dresses, but not, I am sure, with kindlier feelings towards each other.'

The rest of the session Mr. Gladstone passed in his usual pursuits, reading all sorts of books, from the correspondence of Leibnitz with Bossuet, and Alexander Knox's *Remains*, down to Rousseau's *Confessions*. As to the last of these he scarcely knew whether to read on or to throw it aside, and, in fact, he seems only to have persevered with that strange romance of a wandering soul for a day or two. Besides promiscuous reading, he performed some scribbling, including a sonnet, recorded in his diary with notes of wondering exclamation. His family were in London for most of May, his mother in bad health; no other engagement ever interrupted his sedulous attendance on her every day, reading the Bible to her, and telling the news about levees and drawing-rooms, a great dinner at Sir Robert Peel's, and all the rest of his business and recreations. In the House he did little between the fall of the ministry and the close of the session. He once wished to speak, but was shut out by the length of other speeches. 'So,' he moralises, 'I had two useful lessons instead of one. For the sense of helplessness which always

possesses me in prospect of a speech is one very useful lesson; and being disappointed after having attained some due state of excitement and anticipation is another.'

In June at a feast at Newark, which, terrible to relate, lasted from four o'clock to eleven, Mr. Gladstone gave them nearly an hour, not to mention divers minor speeches. His father 'expressed himself with beautiful and affectionate truth of feeling, and the party sympathised.' His own speech deserves to be noted as indicating the political geography for three or four years to come. The standing dish of the tory opposition of the period was highly-spiced reproach of the ministers for living on the support of O'Connell, and Newark was regaled with an ample meal. Mr. Gladstone would not enter into a detail of the exploits, character, political opinions of that Irish gentleman; he would rather say what he thought of him in his presence than in his absence, because he could unfortunately say nothing of him but what was bad. 'This is not the first period in English history,' Mr. Gladstone noted down at that time, 'in which a government has leaned on the Roman catholic interest in Ireland for support. Under the administration of Strafford and at the time of the Scotch revolt, Charles I. was enthusiastically supported by the recusants of the sister isle, and what was the effect? The religious sympathies of the people were touched then and they were so now with the same consequence, in the gradual decline of the party to whom the suspicion attaches in popular fervour and estimation.' Half a century later he may have recalled this early fruit of historic observation. Meanwhile, in his Newark speech, he denounced the government for seeking to undo the mischief of the Irish alliance by systematic agitation. But it was upon the church question, far deeper and more vital than municipal corporations, that the fate of the government should be decided. Then followed a vindication of the church in Ireland. 'The protestant faith is held good for us, and *what is good for us is also good for the population of Ireland.*' That most disastrous of all our false commonplaces was received at Newark, as it has been received so many hundreds of times ever since all over

BOOK II. 1835.

England, with loud and long-continued cheering, to be invariably followed in after act and event with loud and long-continued groaning.[1] Four years later Mr. Gladstone heard words from Lord John Russell on this point, that began to change his mind. 'Often do I think,' he wrote to Lord Russell in 1870, 'of a saying of yours more than thirty years back which struck me ineffaceably at the time. You said: "The true key to our Irish debates was this: that it was not properly borne in mind that as England is inhabited by Englishmen, and Scotland by Scotchmen, so Ireland is inhabited by Irishmen."'[2]

[1] O'Connell paid Newark a short visit in 1836 — spoke against Mr. Gladstone for an hour in the open air, and then left the town, both he and it much as they had been before his arrival.

[2] Walpole, *Life of Lord John Russell*, ii. p. 455.

# CHAPTER III

## PROGRESS IN PUBLIC LIFE

*(1835–1838)*

> Les hommes en tout ne s'éclairent que par le tâtonnement de l'expérience. Les plus grands génies sont eux-mêmes entraînés par leur siècle. — TURGOT.
>
> Men are only enlightened by feeling their way through experience. The greatest geniuses are themselves drawn along by their age.



IN September (1835), after long suffering, his mother died amid tender care and mournful regrets. Her youngest son was a devoted nurse; her loss struck him keenly, but with a sense full of the consolations of his faith. To Gaskell he writes: 'How deeply and thoroughly her character was imbued with love; with what strong and searching processes of bodily affliction she was assimilated in mind and heart to her Redeemer; how above all other things she sighed for the advancement of His kingdom on earth; how few mortals suffered more pain, or more faithfully recognised it as one of the instruments by which God is pleased to forward that restoring process for which we are placed on earth.'

Then the world resumed its course for him, and things fell into their wonted ways of indefatigable study. His scheme for week-days included Blackstone, Mackintosh, Aristotle's *Politics* — 'a book of immense value for all governors and public men' — Dante's *Purgatorio*, Spanish grammar, Tocqueville, Fox's *James II.*, by which he was disappointed, not seeing such an acuteness in extracting and exhibiting the principles that govern from beneath the actions of men and parties, nor such a grasp of generalisation, nor such a faculty of separating minute from material particulars, nor such an abstraction from a debater's modes of thought and forms of expression, as he should have

BOOK II. 1836.

hoped. To these he added as he went along the *Génie du Christianisme*, Bolingbroke, Bacon's *Essays*, *Don Quixote*, the *Annals* of Tacitus, Le Bas' *Life of Laud* ('somewhat too Laudish, though right *au fond*'; unlike Lawson's *Laud*, 'a most intemperate book, the foam swallows up all the facts'), *Childe Harold*, *Jerusalem Delivered* ('beautiful in its kind, but how can its author be placed in the same category of genius as Dante?'), Pollok's *Course of Time* ('much talent, little culture, insufficient power to digest and construct his subject or his versification; his politics radical, his religious sentiments generally sound, though perhaps hard').

In the evenings he read aloud to his father the *Faery Queen* and Shakespeare. On Sundays he read Chillingworth and Jewel, and, above all, he dug and delved in St. Augustine. He drew a sketch of a project touching Peculiarities in Religion. For several days he was writing something on politics. Then an outline or an essay on our colonial system. For he was no reader of the lounging, sauntering, passively receptive species; he went forward in a sedulous process of import and export, a mind actively at work on all the topics that passed before it.

At the beginning of the year 1836 he was invited to pay a visit to Drayton, where he found only Lord Harrowby — a link with the great men of an earlier generation, for he had acted as Pitt's second in the duel with Tierney, and had been foreign secretary in Pitt's administration of 1804; might have been prime minister in 1827 if he had liked; and he headed the Waverers who secured the passing of the Reform bill by the Lords. Other guests followed, the host rather contracting in freedom of conversation as the party expanded.[1]

I cannot record anything continuous, Mr. Gladstone writes in his memorandum of the visit, but commit to paper several opinions and expressions of Sir R. Peel, which bore upon interesting and practical questions. That Fox was not a man of settled, reasoned, political principle. Lord Harrowby added that he was thrown

[1] Parker's *Peel*, ii. p. 321.

into opposition and whiggism by the insult of Lord North. That his own doctrines, both as originally declared, and as resumed when finally in office, were of a highly toned spirit of government. That Brougham was the most *powerful* man he had ever known in the H. of C.; that no one had ever fallen so fast and so far. That the political difficulties of England might be susceptible of cure, and were not appalling; but that the state of Ireland was to all appearance hopeless. That there the great difficulty lay in procuring the ordinary administration of justice; that the very institution of juries supposed a common interest of the juror and the state, a condition not fulfilled in the present instance; that it was quite unfit for the present state of society in Ireland. Lord Harrowby thought that a strong conservative government might still quell agitation. And Sir R. Peel said Stanley had told him that the whig government were on the point of succeeding in putting a stop to the resistance to payment of tithe, when Lord Althorp, alarmed at the expense already incurred, wrote to stop its collection by the military. We should probably live to see the independence of Poland established.

The Duke of Wellington and others arrived later in the day. It was pleasing to see the deference with which he was received as he entered the library; at the sound of his name everybody rose; he is addressed by all with a respectful manner. He met Peel most cordially, and seized both Lady Peel's hands. I now recollect that it was with *glee* Sir R. Peel said to me on Monday, 'I am glad to say you will meet the duke here,' which had reference, I doubt not, partly to the anticipated pleasure of seeing him, partly to the dissipation of unworthy suspicions. He reported that government are still labouring at a church measure without appropriation. *Jan.* 20. — The Duke of Wellington appears to speak little; and never for speaking's sake, but only to convey an idea, commonly worth conveying. He receives remarks made to him very frequently with no more than 'Ha,' a convenient, suspensive expression, which acknowledges the arrival of the observation and no more. Of the two days which he spent here he hunted on Thursday, shot on Friday, and to-day travelled to Strathfieldsay, more, I believe, than 100 miles, to entertain a party of friends to dinner. With this bodily

BOOK II. 1836.

exertion he mixes at 66 or 67 a constant attention to business. Sir R. Peel mentioned to me to-night a very remarkable example of his [the duke's] perhaps excessive precision. Whenever he signs a draft on Coutts's, he addresses to them at the same time a note apprising them that he has done so. This perfect facility of transition from one class of occupation to their opposites, and their habitual intermixture without any apparent encroachments on either side, is, I think, a very remarkable evidence of self-command, and a mental power of singular utility. Sir Robert is also, I conceive, a thrifty dealer with his time, but in a man of his age [Peel now 48] this is less beyond expectation.

He said good-bye on the last night with regret. In the midst of the great company he found time to read Bossuet on Variations, remarking rather oddly, 'some of Bossuet's theology seems to me very good.'

On Jan. 30th is the entry of his journey from Liverpool, '1 to 4 to Hawarden Castle.' [I suppose his first visit to his future home.] Got to Chester (Feb. 1) five minutes after the mail had started. Got on by Albion. Outside all night; frost; rain; arrived at Albany 11¾. *Feb. 4th.* — Session opens. Voted in 243–284. A good opportunity for speaking, but in my weakness did not use it. *Feb. 8th.* — Stanley made a noble speech. Voted in 243 to 307 for abolition of Irish corporations. Pendulums and Nothingarians all against us. *Sunday.* — Wrote on Hypocrisy. On Worship. Attempted to explain this to the servants at night. Newman's Sermons and J. Taylor. Trench's Poems. *March 2nd.* — Read to my deep sorrow of Anstice's death on Monday. His friends, his young widow, the world can spare him ill; so says at least the flesh. Stapleton. *Paradiso*, VII. VIII. Calls. Rode. Wrote. Dined at Lord Ashburton's. House. Statistical Society's *Proceedings*. Verses on Anstice's death. *March 22nd.* — House 5¼–9¾. Spoke 50 minutes [on negro apprenticeship; see p. 145]; kindly heard, and I should thank God for being made able to speak even thus indifferently.[1] *March 23rd.* . . . Late, having been

[1] The *Standard* marks it 'as a brilliant and triumphant argument — one of the few gems that have illuminated the reformed House of Commons.'

awake last night till between 4 and 5, as usual after speaking. How useful to make us feel the habitual unremembered blessing of sound sleep. . . . *April 7th.* — *Gerus. Lib.* c. xi. . . . Dr. Pusey here from 12 to 3 about church building. Rode. At night 11 to 2 perusing Henry Taylor's proofs of *The Statesman*, and writing notes on it, presumptuous enough. . . . *Gerus.* xii. Re-perused Taylor's sheets. A batch of calls. Wrote letters. Bossuet. Dined at Henry Taylor's, a keen intellectual exercise, and thus a place of danger, especially as it is exercise seen. . . . *9th.* — Spedding at breakfast. *Gerus.* xiii. Finished Locke on Understanding. It appears to me on the whole a much overrated, though, in some respects, a very useful book. . . . *May 16th.* — Mr. Wordsworth, H. Taylor, and Doyle to breakfast. Sat till 12¾. Conversation on Shelley, Trench, Tennyson; travelling, copyright, etc. *30th.* — Milnes, Blakesley, Taylor, Cole, to breakfast. Church meeting at Archbishop of Armagh's. Ancient music rehearsal. House 6–8¼ and 9¼–12. *June 1st.* — Read Wordsworth. . . . House 5–12. Spoke about 45 minutes [on Tithes and Church (Ireland) bill]. I had this pleasure in my speech, that I never rose more intent upon telling what I believe to be royal truth; though I did it very ill, and further than ever below the idea which I would nevertheless hold before my mind. *3rd.* — West Indies Committee 1–4. Finished writing out my speech and sent it. Read Wordsworth. . . . Saw Sir R. Peel. Dined at Sergeant Talfourd's to meet Wordsworth. . . . *5th.* — St. James's, Communion. Dined at Lincoln's Inn. St. Sepulchre's. Wrote. Jer. Taylor, Newman. Began Nicole's *Préjugés*. Arnold aloud. *8th.* — Wordsworth, since he has been in town, has breakfasted twice and dined once with me. Intercourse with him is, upon the whole, extremely pleasing. I was sorry to hear Sydney Smith say that he did not see very much in him, nor greatly admire his poems. He even adverted to the London Sonnet as ridiculous. Sheil thought this of the line:

'Dear God! the very houses seem asleep.'

I ventured to call his attention to that which followed as carrying out the idea:

'And all that mighty heart is lying still.'

Of which I may say *omne tulit punctum.*

BOOK II. 1836.

Wordsworth came in to breakfast the other day before his time. I asked him to excuse me while I had my servant to prayers; but he expressed a *hearty* wish to be present, which was delightful. He has laboured long; if for himself, yet more for men, and over all I trust for God. Will he ever be the bearer of evil thoughts to any mind? Glory is gathering round his later years on earth, and his later works especially indicate the spiritual ripening of his noble soul. I heard but few of his opinions; but these are some He was charmed with Trench's poems; liked Alford; thought Shelley had the greatest native powers in poetry of all the men of this age. In reading *Die Braut von Korinth* translated, was more horrified than enchained, or rather altogether the first. Wondered how any one could translate it or the Faust, but spoke as knowing the original. Thought little of Murillo as to the mind of painting; said he could not have painted Paul Veronese's 'Marriage of Cana.' Considered that old age in great measure disqualified him by its rigid fixity of habits from judging of the works of young poets — I must say that he was here even over liberal in self-depreciation. He defended the make of the steamboat as more poetical than otherwise to the eye (see Sonnets[1]). Thought Coleridge admired Ossian only in youth, and himself admired the spirit which Macpherson *professes* to embody.

Sergeant Talfourd dined here to meet Wordsworth yesterday. Wordsworth is vehement against Byron. Saw in Shelley the lowest form of irreligion, but a later progress towards better things. Named the discrepancy between his creed and his imagination as the marring idea of his works, in which description I could not concur. Spoke of the *entire* revolution in his own poetical taste. We were agreed that a man's personal character ought to be the basis of his politics. He quoted his sonnet on the contested election [what sonnet is this ?], from which I ventured to differ as regards its assuming nutriment for the heart to be inherent in politics. He described to me his views; that the Reform Act had, as it were, brought out too prominently a particular muscle of the national frame: the strength of the towns; that the cure was to be found in a large further enfran-

[1] 'Motions and Means on Land and Sea at War,' v. 248. Steamboats, Viaducts, and Railways.

chisement, I fancy, of the country chiefly; that you would thus extend the base of your pyramid and so give it strength. He wished the old institutions of the country preserved, and thought this the way to preserve them. He thought the political franchise upon the whole a good to the mass — regard being had to the state of human nature; against me. 11*th.* — Read Browning's *Paracelsus.* Went to Richmond to dine with the Gaskells. A two hours' walk home at night. 16*th.* — Wrote two sonnets. Finished and wrote out *Braut von Korinth.* Shall I ever dare to make out a counterpart? 21*st.* — Breakfast at Mr. Hallam's to meet Mr. Wordsworth and Mr. Rogers. Wordsworth spoke much and justly about copyright. Conversation with Talfourd in the evening, partly about that subject. Began something on egotism. 24*th.* — Breakfast with Mr. Rogers, Mr. Wordsworth only there. Very agreeable. Rogers produced an American poem, the death of Bozzaris, which Wordsworth proposed that I should read to them: of course I declined, so even did Rogers. But Wordsworth read it through in good taste, and doing it justice.

*Fasque* in time for Aug. 12; out on the hill, but unlucky with a sprained ankle, and obliged to give up early. *Aug.* 15*th.* — Wrote (long) to Dr. Chalmers. Orator. *Sept.* 20*th.* — Milner, finished Vol. ii. Cic. *Acad.* Wraxall. Began Goethe's *Iphigenie.* Wrote. *Oct.* 7*th.* — Milner. Wraxall. A dinner-party. Wrote out a sketch for an essay on Justification. Singing, whist, shooting. Copied a paper for my father. 12*th.* — A day on the hill for roe. 14 guns. [To Liverpool for public dinner at the Amphitheatre.] 18*th.* — Most kindly heard. Canning's début everything that could be desired. I thought I spoke 35 minutes, but afterwards found it was 55. Read *Marco Visconti.* 21*st.*—Operative dinner at Amphitheatre. Spoke perhaps 16 or 18 minutes. 28*th.* — *Haddo* [Lord Aberdeen's]. Finished *Marco Visconti,* a long bout, but I could not let it go. Buckland's opening chapters. *On the whole* satisfactory. 30*th.* — Lord Aberdeen read prayers in the evening with simple and earnest pathos. *Nov.* 10*th.* — *Wilhelm Meister,* Book i., and there I mean to leave it, unless I hear a better report of the succeeding one than I could make of the first. Next day, recommenced with great anticipations of delight the *Divina Commedia.* 13*th.*—Finished Nicole *De l'Unité.* August. *De Civ.* [Every day at this time.]

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19*th.* — Began Cicero's *Tusculan Questions.* . . . 25*th.* — Aug. *Civ. Dei.* I am now in Book xiv. Cic. *Tusc.* finished. Book ii. *Purgatorio,* iii.–v. A dose of whist. Still snow and rain. 26*th.* — Aug. Cicero. Billiards. *Purgatorio,* vi.–viii. Began Dryden's *Fables.* My eyes are not in their best plight, and I am obliged to consider type a little. *Jan.* 3*rd,* 1837. — Breakfasted with Dr. Chalmers. How kind my father is in small matters as well as great — thoughtfully sending carriage. 13*th, Glasgow.* — The pavilion astonishing, and the whole effect very grand. Near 3500. Sir R. Peel spoke 1 h. 55 m. Explicit and bold; it was a very great effort. I kept within 15 min. — quite long enough. 14*th.* — $7\frac{1}{2}$–$5\frac{1}{2}$ mail to Carlisle. On all night. 15*th.* Wetherby at $7\frac{1}{2}$. Leeds $10\frac{1}{2}$. Church there. Walked over to Wakefield. Church there. Evening at Thornes. [Milnes Gaskell's.] 17*th.* — To Newark. Very good meeting. Spoke $\frac{3}{4}$ hour.

In this speech, after the regulation denunciation of the reckless wickedness of O'Connell, he set about demonstrating the change that had taken place in the character of public feeling during the last few years. He pointed out that at the dissolution of 1831 the conservative members of the House of Commons amounted perhaps to 50. In 1835 they saw this small dispirited band grow into a resolute and formidable phalanx of 300. The cry was: 'Resolute attachment to the institutions of the country.' One passage in the speech is of interest in the history of his attitude on toleration. Sir William Molesworth had been invited to come forward as candidate for the representation of Leeds. A report spread that Sir William was not a believer in the Christian articles of faith. Somebody wrote to Molesworth, to know if this was true. He answered, that the question whether he was a believer in the Christian religion was one that no man of liberal principles ought to propose to another, or could propose without being guilty of a dereliction of duty. On this incident, Mr. Gladstone said that he would ask, 'Is it not a time for serious reflection among moderate and candid men of all parties, when such a question was actually thought impertinent interference? Surely they would say with him, that men who have no belief in the

divine revelation are not the men to govern this nation, be they whigs or radicals.' Long, extraordinary, and not inglorious, was the ascent from such a position as this, to the principles so nobly vindicated in the speech on the Affirmation bill in 1883.

At the end of January he is back in London, arranging books and papers and making a little daylight in his chaos. 'What useful advice might a man who has been *buon pezzo* in parliament give to one going into it, on this mechanical portion of his business.' The entries for 1837 are none of them especially interesting. Every day in the midst of full parliamentary work, social engagements, and public duties outside of the House of Commons, he was elaborating the treatise on the relations of church and state, of which we shall see more in our following chapter. At the beginning of the session he went to a dinner at Peel's, at which Lord Stanley and some of his friends were present — a circumstance noted as a sign of the impending fusion between the whig seceders of 1834 and the conservative party. Sir Robert seems to have gone on extending his confidence in him.

I visited Sir Robert Peel (March 4th) about the Canada question, and again by appointment on the 6th, with Lord Aberdeen. On the former day he said, 'Is there any one else to invite?' I suggested Lord Stanley. He said, perhaps he might be inclined to take a separate view. But in the interval he had apparently thought otherwise. For on Monday he read to Lord Aberdeen and myself a letter from Stanley written with the utmost frankness and in a tone of political intimacy, saying that an engagement as chairman of a committee at the House would prevent his meeting us. The business of the day was discussed in conversation, and it was agreed to be quite impossible to support the resolution on the legislative council in its existing terms, without at least a protest. Peel made the following remark: 'You have got another Ireland growing up in every colony you possess.'

A week later he was shocked by the death of Lady Canning. 'Breakfast with Gaskell' (March 23rd), 'and thence to Lady Canning's funeral in Westminster Abbey. We were but

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eleven in attendance. Her coffin was laid on that of her illustrious husband. Canning showed a deep but manly sorrow. May we live as by the side of a grave and looking in.'

In the same month he spoke on Canada (March 8th) 'with insufficient possession of the subject,' and a week later on church rates, for an hour or more, 'with more success than the matter or manner deserved.' He finished his translation of the *Bride of Corinth*, and the episode of Ugolino from Dante, and read Eckermann's *Conversations with Goethe*, to which he gives the too commonplace praise of being very interesting. He learned Manzoni's noble ode on the death of Napoleon, of which he by-and-by made a noble translation; this by way of sparing his eyes, and Italian poetry not taking him nearly half the time of any other to commit to memory. He found a 'beautiful and powerful production' in Channing's letter to Clay, and he made the acquaintance of Southey, 'in appearance benignant, melancholy, and intellectual.'

II

In June King William IV. died, 'leaving a perilous legacy to his successor.' A month later (July 14) Mr. Gladstone went up with the Oxford address, and this was, I suppose, the first occasion on which he was called to present himself before the Queen, with whose long reign his own future career and fame were destined to be so closely and so conspicuously associated. According to the old law prescribing a dissolution of parliament within six months of the demise of the crown, Mr. Gladstone was soon in the thick of a general election. By July 17th he was at Newark, canvassing, speaking, hand-shaking, and in lucid intervals reading Filicaja. He found a very strong, angry, and general sentiment, not against the principle of the poor law as regards the able-bodied, but against the regulations for separating man and wife, and sending the old compulsorily to the workhouse, with others of a like nature. With the disapprobation on these heads he in great part concurred. There was to be no contest, but arrangements of this kind still leave room for some anxiety, and in Mr. Gladstone's

case a singular thing happened. Two days after his arrival at Newark he was followed by a body of gentlemen from Manchester, with an earnest invitation that he would be a candidate for that great town. He declined the invitation, absolutely as he supposed, but the Manchester tories nominated him notwithstanding. They assured the electors that he was the most promising young statesman of the day. The whigs on the other hand vowed that he was an insulter of dissent, a bigot of such dark hue as to wish to subject even the poor negroes of his father's estates to the slavery of a dominant church, a man who owed whatever wealth and consequence his family possessed to the crime of holding his fellow-creatures in bondage, a man who, though honest and consistent, was a member of that small ultra-tory minority which followed the Duke of Cumberland. When the votes were counted, Mr. Gladstone was at the bottom of the poll, with a majority of many hundreds against him.[1]

Meantime he was already member for Newark. His own election was no sooner over than he caught the last vacant place on the mail to Carlisle, whence he hastened to the aid of his father's patriotic labours as candidate for Dundee. Here he worked hard at canvassing and meetings, often pelted with mud and stones, but encouraged by friends more buoyant than the event justified.

*Aug.* 1*st.* — My father beaten after all, our promised votes in many cases going back or going against us. . . . Two hundred promises broken. Poll closed at Parnell, 666; Gladstone, 381. It is not in human approbation that the reward of right action is to be sought. Left at 4½ amid the hisses of the crowd. Perth at 7¼. Left at one in the morning for Glasgow. *2nd.* — Glasgow 8½. Steamer at 11. Breeze; miserably sick; deck all night. *3rd.* — Arrived at 11½; (Liverpool), very sore. *4th.* — Out at 8¼ to vote for S. Lancashire. Acted as representative in the booth half the day. Results of election excellent. *5th.* — Again at the booths. A great victory here. *6th.* — Wrote to Manning on the death of his wife. *9th.* — *Manchester.* Public dinner at 6;

[1] Thomson, 4127; Philips, 3759; Gladstone, 2324.

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lasted till near 12. Music excellent. Spoke 1½ hours, I am told, *proh pudor!*[1]

1837.

Back at Fasque, only a day too late for the Twelfth, he found the sport bad and he shot badly, but he enjoyed the healthful walks on the hill. His employments were curiously mixed. '*Sept. 8th.* — In the bog for snipe with Sir J. Mackenzie. Read *Timæus*. Began Byron's Life. My eyes refused progress. Verses. *15th.* — Snipe-shooting with F. in the bog. Began *Critias*. *22nd.* — *Haddo*. Otter-hunting, *senz' esito*. Finished Plato's *Laws*. Hunting too in the library.' The mental dispersion of country-house visiting never affects either multifarious reading or multifarious writing. Spanish grammar, *Don Quixote* in the original, Crabbe, *Don Juan*, alternate with Augustine *de peccatorum remissione* or *de utilitate Credendi* ('beautiful and useful'). He works at an essay of his own upon Justification, at adversaria on Aristotle's *Ethics*, at another essay upon

[1] In this speech he dealt with an attack made upon him by his opponent, Poulett Thomson, afterwards Lord Sydenham, on the question of negro slavery: —

'I have had some obloquy cast upon me by Mr. Thomson, in reference to the part which I took in the question of negro slavery. Now, if there was ever a question upon which I would desire to submit all that I have ever said to a candid inquirer, it is that of negro slavery. He should try me in opposition to Lord Stanley, and did Lord Stanley complain? It is well known that he stated that the only two speeches which were decidedly hostile to that measure were delivered by two gentlemen who hold office under her majesty's present government, whilst, on the contrary, his lordship was pleased to express candidly his high approbation of my sentiments, and my individual exertions for the settlement of that matter. Does Mr. Thomson mean to say that the great conservative body in parliament has offered opposition to that measure? Who, I would ask, conducted the correspondence of the government office with reference to that important question? Will any man who knows the character of Lord Bathurst — will any man who knows the character of Mr. Stephen, the under-secretary for the colonies—the chosen assistant of the noble lord in that ministry of which he was no unimportant member — will any man say that Mr. Stephen, who was all along the advocate of the slaves, with his liberal and enlightened views, exercised an influence less than under Lord Stanley? Does Mr. Thomson presume to state that Lord Aberdeen was guilty of neglect to the slaves? When I add that the question underwent a considerable discussion last year, in the House of Commons, when all parties and all interests were fairly represented, and the best disposition was evinced to assist the proper working of the measure, and to alter some parts that were considered injurious to the slaves, and which had come under the immediate cognisance of the conservative party, is it fair, is it just, that a minister of the crown should take advantage, for electioneering purposes, of the fact that my connections have an interest in the West Indies, to throw discredit upon me and the cause which I advocate?'

Rationalism, and to save his eyes, spins verse enough to fill a decent volume of a hundred and fifty pages. He makes a circuit of calls upon the tenants, taking a farming lecture from one, praying by the sick-bed of another.

In November he was again in London to be sworn of the new parliament, and at the end of the month he had for the first time an interview on business with the Duke of Wellington — of interest as the collocation of two famous names. 'The immediate subject was the Cape of Good Hope. His reception of me was plain but kind. He came to the door of his room. "Will you come in? How do you do? I am glad to see you." We spoke a little of the Cape. He said with regard to the war — and with sufficient modesty — that he was pretty well aware of the operations that had taken place in it, having been at the Cape, and being in some degree able to judge of those matters. He said, "I suppose it is there as everywhere else, as we had it last night about Ireland and the House of Lords. They won't use the law, as it is in Canada, as it is in the West Indies. They excite insurrection everywhere (I, however, put in an apology for them in the West Indies), they *want to play the part of opposition;* they are not a government, for they don't maintain the law." He appointed me to return to him to-morrow.'

The result of the general election was a slight improvement in the position of the conservatives, but they still mustered no more than 315 against 342 supporters of the ministry, including the radical and Irish groups. If Melbourne and Russell found their team delicate to drive, Peel's difficulties were hardly less. Few people, he wrote at this moment, can judge of the difficulty there has frequently been in maintaining harmony between the various branches of the conservative party. The great majority in the Lords and the minority in the Commons consisted of very different elements; they included men like Stanley and Graham, who had been authors and advocates of parliamentary reform, and men who had denounced reform as treason to the constitution and ruin to the country. Even the animosities of 1829 and catholic emancipation were only half quenched

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within the tory ranks[1] It was at a meeting held at Peel's on December 6, 1837, that Lord Stanley for the first time appeared among the conservative members.

The distractions produced in Canada by mismanagement and misapprehension in Downing Street had already given trouble during the very short time when Mr. Gladstone was under-secretary at the colonial office; but they now broke into the flame of open revolt. The perversity of a foolish king and weakness and disunion among his whig ministers had brought about a catastrophe. At the beginning of the session (1838) the government introduced a bill suspending the constitution and conferring various absolute powers on Lord Durham as governor general and high commissioner. It was in connection with this proposal that Mr. Gladstone seems to have been first taken into the confidential consultations of the leaders of his party.

The sage marshalling and manœuvring of the parliamentary squads was embarrassed by a move from Sir William Molesworth, of whom we have just been hearing, the editor of Hobbes, and one of the group nicknamed philosophic radicals with whom Mr. Gladstone at this stage seldom or never agreed. 'The new school of morals,' he called them, 'which taught that success was the only criterion of merit,' — a delineation for which he would have been severely handled by Bentham or James Mill. Molesworth gave notice of a vote of censure on Lord Glenelg, the colonial minister; that is, he selected a single member of the cabinet for condemnation, on the ground of acts for which all the other ministers were collectively just as responsible. For this discrimination the only precedent seems to be Fox's motion against Lord Sandwich in 1779. Mr. Gladstone's memorandum[2] completes or modifies the account of the dilemma of the conservative leader, already known from Sir Robert Peel's papers,[3] and the reader will find it elsewhere. It was the right of a conservative opposition to challenge a whig ministry; yet to fight under radical colours was odious and intolerable. On the other hand he

[1] Parker's *Peel*, ii. pp. 336–8.

[2] See Appendix.

[3] Parker, ii. pp. 352–367.

could not vote for Molesworth, because he thought him unjust; but he could not vote against him, because that would imply confidence in the Canadian policy of ministers. A certain conservative contingent would not acquiesce in support of ministers against Molesworth, or in tame resort to the previous question. Again, Peel felt or feigned an apprehension that if by aggressive action they beat the government, a conservative ministry must come in, and he did not think that such a ministry could last. Even at this risk, it became clear that the only way of avoiding the difficulty was an amendment to Molesworth's motion from the official opposition. Mr. Gladstone spoke (Mar. 7), and was described as making his points with admirable precision and force, though 'with something of a provincial manner, like the rust to a piece of powerful steel machinery that has not worked into polish.' The debate, on which such mighty issues were thought to hang, lasted a couple of nights with not more than moderate spirit. At the close the amendment was thrown out by a majority of twenty-nine for ministers. The general result was to moderate the impatience of the Carlton Club men, who wished to see their party in, on the one hand; and of the radical men, who did not object to having the whigs out, on the other. It showed that neither administration nor opposition was in a station of supreme command.

### III

At the end of March Mr. Gladstone produced the strongest impression that he had yet made in parliament, and he now definitely took his place in the front rank. It was on the old embarrassment of slavery. Reports from the colonies showed that in some at least, and more particularly in Jamaica, the apprenticeship system had led to harsher treatment of the negroes than under slavery. As it has been well put, the bad planters regarded their slave-apprentices as a bad farmer regards a farm near the end of an expiring term. In 1836 Buxton moved for a select committee to inquire into the working of the system. Mr. Gladstone defended it, and he warned parliament against 'incautious and precipitate

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anticipations of entire success' (March 22). Six days later he was appointed a member of the apprenticeship committee which at once began to investigate the complaints from Jamaica. Mr. Gladstone acted as the representative of the planters on the committee, and he paid very close attention to the proceedings during two sessions. In the spring of 1838 a motion was made to accelerate by two years the end of the apprenticeship system on the slave plantations of the West Indies. Brougham had been raising a tempest of humane sentiment by more than one of his most magnificent speeches. The leading men on both sides in parliament were openly and strongly against a disturbance of the settlement, but the feeling in the constituencies was hot, and in liberal and tory camp alike members in fear and trembling tried to make up their minds. Sir George Grey made an effective case for the law as it stood, and Peel spoke on the same side; but it was agreed that Mr. Gladstone, by his union of fervour, elevation, and a complete mastery of the facts of the case, went deeper than either. Even unwilling witnesses 'felt bound to admit the great ability he displayed.' His address was completely that of an advocate, and he did not even affect to look on both sides of the question, expressing his joy that the day had at length arrived when he could meet the charges against the planters and enter upon their defence.

*March 30th.* — Spoke from 11 to 1. Received with the greatest and most affecting kindness from all parties, both during and after. Through the debate I felt the most painful depression. Except Mr. Plumptre and Lord John Russell, all who spoke damaged the question to the utmost possible degree. Prayer earnest for the moment was wrung from me in my necessity; I hope it was not a blasphemous prayer, for support in pleading the cause of justice. . . . I am half insensible even in the moment of delight to such pleasures as this kind of occasion affords. But this is a dangerous state; indifference to the world is not love of God. . . .

In writing to him upon this speech, Mr. Stephen, his former ally at the colonial office, addressed an admonition, which is worth recalling both for its own sake and because it hits by

anticipation what was to be one of the most admirable traits in the mighty parliamentarian to whom it was written. 'It seems to me,' says Stephen, 'that this part of your speech establishes nothing more than the fact that your opponents are capricious in the distribution of their sympathy, which is, after all, a reproach and nothing more. Now, reproach is not only not your strength, but it is the very thing in the disuse of which your strength consists; and indulging as I do the hope that you will one day occupy one of the foremost stations in the House of Commons, if not the first of all, I cannot help wishing that you may also be the founder of a more magnanimous system of parliamentary tactics than has ever yet been established, in which recrimination will be condemned as unbefitting wise men and good Christians.' In an assembly for candid deliberation modified by party spirit, this is, I fear, almost as much a counsel of perfection as it would have been in a school of Roman gladiators, but at any rate it points the better way. The speech itself has a close, direct, sinewy quality, a complete freedom from anything vague or involved; and shows for the first time a perfect mastery of the art of handling detail upon detail without an instant of tediousness, and holding the attention of listeners sustained and unbroken. It was a remonstrance against false allegations of the misbehaviour of the planters since the emancipating act, but there is not a trace of backsliding upon the great issue. 'We joined in passing the measure; we declared a belief that slavery was an evil and demoralising state, and *a desire to be relieved from it;* we accepted a price in composition for the loss which was expected to accrue.'

Neither now or at any time did Mr. Gladstone set too low a value on that great dead-lift effort, not too familiar in history, to heave off a burden from the conscience of the nation, and set back the bounds of cruel wrong upon the earth. On the day after this performance, the entry in his diary is — 'In the morning my father was greatly overcome, and I could hardly speak to him. Now is the time to turn this attack into measures of benefit for the negroes.' More than once in the course of the spring he showed how much in

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earnest he was about the negroes, by strenuously pressing his father to allow him to go to the West Indies and view the state of things there for himself. Perhaps by prudent instinct his father disapproved, and at last spoke decidedly against any project of the kind.

The question of the education of the people was rising into political prominence, and its close relations with the claims of the church sufficed to engage the active interest of so zealous a son of the church as Mr. Gladstone. From a very early stage we find him moving for returns, serving on education committees in parliament, corresponding energetically with Manning, Acland, and others of like mind in and out of parliament. Primary education is one of the few subjects on which the fossils of extinct opinion neither interest nor instruct. It is enough to mark that Mr. Gladstone's position in the forties was that of the ultra-churchman of the time, and such as no church-ultra now dreams of fighting for. We find him 'objecting to any infringement whatever of the principle on which the established church was founded — that of confining the pecuniary support of the state to one particular religious denomination.'[1]

To Dr. Hook (March 12, 1838), he speaks of 'a safe and precious interval, perhaps the last to those who are desirous of placing the education of the people under the efficient control of the clergy.' The aims of himself and his allies were to plant training schools in every diocese; to connect these with the cathedrals through the chapters; to license the teachers by the bishops after examination.

Writing to Manning (Feb. 22, 1839), he compares control by government to the 'little lion cub in the *Agamemnon*,' which after being in its primeval season the delight of the young and amusement of the old, gradually revealed its parent stock, and grew to be a creature of huge mischief in the household.[2] He describes a divergence of view among

[1] *Hansard*, June 20, 1839.

[2] *Agam.* 696–716.

Even so belike might one
A lion suckling nurse,
Like a foster-son,
To his home a future curse.
In life's beginnings mild
Dear to sire and kind to child. . . .
But in time he showed
The habit of his blood. . . .
— Gladstone in *Translations*, p. 83.

them on the question whether the clergyman should have his choice as to 'admitting the children of dissenters without at once teaching them the catechism.' How Mr. Gladstone went he does not say, nor does it matter. He was not yet thirty. He accepted his political toryism on authority and in good faith, and the same was true of his views on church policy. He could not foresee that it was to be in his own day of power that the cub should come out full-grown lion.

His work did not prevent him from mixing pretty freely with men in society, though he seems to have thought that little of what passed was worth transcribing, nor in truth had Mr. Gladstone ever much or any of the rare talent of the born diarist. Here are one or two miscellanea which must be made to serve: —

*April* 25/38. — A long sitting and conversation with Mr. Rogers after the Milnes' marriage breakfast. He spoke unfavourably of Bulwer; well of Milnes' verses; said his father wished them not to be published, because such authorship and its repute would clash with the parliamentary career of his son. Mr. Rogers thought a great author would undoubtedly stand better in parliament from being such; but that otherwise the additament of authorship, unless on germane subjects, would be a hindrance. He quoted Swift on women. . . . He has a good and tender opinion of them; but went nearly the length of Maurice (when mentioned to him) that they had not that specific faculty of understanding which lies beneath the reason. Peel was odd, in the contrast of a familiar first address, with slackness of manner afterwards. The Duke of Wellington took the greatest interest in the poor around him at Strathfieldsay, had all of eloquence except the words. Mr. Rogers quoted a saying about Brougham that he was not so much a master of the language as mastered by it. I doubt very much the truth of this. Brougham's management of his sentences, as I remember the late Lady Canning observing to me, is surely most wonderful. He never loses the thread, and yet he habitually twists it into a thousand varieties of intricate form. He said, when Stanley came out in public life, and at the age of thirty, he was by far the cleverest young man of the day; and at sixty he would be the same, still by far the cleverest young man of the day.

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*June 13th.* — Sir R. Peel dined at Mr. Dugdale's. After dinner he spoke of Wilberforce; believed him to be an excellent man independently of the book, or would not have been favourably impressed by the records of his being in society, and then going home and describing as lost in sin those with whom he had been enjoying himself. Upon the other hand, however, he would have exposed himself to the opposite reproach had he been more secluded, morosely withdrawing himself from the range of human sympathies. He remembered him as an admirable speaker; agreed that the results of his life were very great (and the man must be in part measured by them). He disapproved of taking people to task by articles in the papers, for votes against their party.

*July 18th.* — I complimented the Speaker yesterday on the time he had saved by putting an end to discussions upon the presentation of petitions. He replied that there was a more important advantage; that those discussions very greatly increased the influence of popular feeling on the deliberations of the House; and that by stopping them he thought a wall was erected against such influence — not as strong as might be wished. Probably some day it might be broken down, but he had done his best to raise it. His maxim was to shut out as far as might be all extrinsic pressure, and then to do freely what was right within doors.

This high and sound way of regarding parliament underwent formidable changes before the close of Mr. Gladstone's career, and perhaps his career had indirectly something to do with them. But not, I think, with intention. In 1838 he cited with approval an exclamation of Roebuck's in the House of Commons, 'We, sir, are or ought to be the *élite* of the people of England for mind: we are at the head of the mind of the people of England.'

Mr. Gladstone's position in parliament and the public judgment, as the session went on, is sufficiently manifest from a letter addressed to him at this time by Samuel Wilberforce, four years his junior, henceforth one of his nearest friends, and always an acute observer of social and political forces. 'It would be an affectation in you, which you are above,' writes the future bishop (April 20, 1838), 'not to know that few young men have the weight you have

in the H. of C. and are gaining rapidly throughout the country. . . . I want to urge you to look calmly before you, . . . and act now with a view to *then*. There is no height to which you may not fairly rise in this country. If it pleases God to spare us violent convulsions and the loss of our liberties, you may at a future day wield the whole government of this land; and if this should be so, of what extreme moment will your *past steps* then be to the real usefulness of your high station.'

## CHAPTER IV

### THE CHURCH

*(1838)*

A PERIOD and a movement certainly among the most remarkable in the Christendom of the last three and a half centuries; probably more remarkable than the movement associated with the name of Port Royal, for that has passed away and left hardly a trace behind; but this has left ineffaceable marks upon the English church and nation. — GLADSTONE (1891).

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IT was the affinity of great natures for great issues that made Mr. Gladstone from his earliest manhood onwards take and hold fast the affairs of the churches for the objects of his most absorbing interest. He was one and the same man, his genius was one. His persistent incursions all through his long life into the multifarious doings, not only of his own anglican communion, but of the Latin church of the west, as well as of the motley Christendom of the east, puzzled and vexed political whippers-in, wire-pullers, newspaper editors, leaders, colleagues; they were the despair of party caucuses; and they made the neutral man of the world smile, as eccentricities of genius and rather singularly chosen recreations. All this was, in truth, of the very essence of his character, the manifestation of its profound unity.

The quarrel upon church comprehension that had perplexed Elizabeth and Burleigh, had distracted the councils of Charles I. and of Cromwell, had bewildered William of Orange and Tillotson and Burnet, was once more aglow with its old heat. The still mightier dispute, how wide or how narrow is the common ground between the church of England and the church of Rome, broke into fierce flame.

CHAP. IV.

Æt. 28.

Then by and by these familiar contests of ancient tradition, thus quickened in the eternal ebb and flow of human things into fresh vitality, were followed by a revival, with new artillery and larger strategy, of a standing war that is roughly described as the conflict between reason and faith, between science and revelation. The controversy of Laudian divines with puritans, of Hoadly with non-jurors, of Hanoverian divines with deists and free-thinkers, all may seem now to us narrow and dry when compared with such a drama, of so many interesting characters, strange evolutions, and multiple and startling climax, as gradually unfolded itself to Mr. Gladstone's ardent and impassioned gaze.

His is not one of the cases, like Pascal, or Baxter, or Rutherford, or a hundred others, where a man's theological history is to the world, however it may seem to himself, the most important aspect of his career or character. This is not the place for an exploration of Mr. Gladstone's strictly theological history, nor is mine the hand by which such exploration could be attempted. In the sphere of dogmatic faith, apart from ecclesiastical politics and all the war of principles connected with such politics, Mr. Gladstone, by the time when he was thirty, had become a man of settled questions. Nor was he for his own part, with a remarkable exception in respect of one particular doctrine towards the end of his life, ever ready to re-open them. What is extraordinary in the career of this far-shining and dominant character of his age, is not a development of specific opinions on dogma, or discipline, or ordinance, on article or sacrament, but the fact that with a steadfast tread he marched along the high anglican road to the summits of that liberalism which it was the original object of the new anglicans to resist and overthrow.

The years from 1831 to 1840 Mr. Gladstone marked as an era of a marvellous uprising of religious energy throughout the land; it saved the church, he says. Not only in Oxford but in England he declares that party spirit within the church had fallen to a low ebb. Coming hurricanes were not foreseen. In Lord Liverpool's government patronage was considered to have been respectably dispensed, and church

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reform was never heard of.[1] This dreamless composure was rudely broken. The repeal of the test and corporation Acts in 1828 first roused the church; and her sons rubbed their eyes when they beheld parliament bringing frankly to an end the odious monopoly of office under the crown, all corporate office, all magistracy, in men willing to take the communion at the altar of the privileged establishment. The next year a deadlier blow fell after a more embittered fight — the admission of Roman catholics to parliament and place. The Reform bill of 1832 followed. Even when half spent, the forces that had been gathering for many years in the direction of parliamentary reform, and had at last achieved more than one immense result, rolled heavily forward against the church. The opening of parliament and of close corporations was taken to involve an opening to correspond in the grandest and closest of all corporations. The resounding victory of the constitutional bill of 1832 was followed by a drastic handling of the church in Ireland, and by a proposal to divert a surplus of its property to purposes not ecclesiastical. A long and peculiarly unedifying crisis ensued. Stanley and Graham, two of the most eminent members of the reforming whig cabinet, on this proposal at once resigned. The Grey ministry was thus split in 1834, and the Peel ministry ejected in 1835, on the ground of the absolute inviolability of the property of the Irish church. The tide of reaction set slowly in. The shock in political party was in no long time followed by shock after shock in the church. As has happened on more than one occasion in our history, alarm for the church kindled the conservative temper in the nation. Or to put it in another way, that spontaneous attachment to the old order of things, with all its symbols, institutes, and deep associations, which the radical reformers had both affronted and ignored, made the church its rallying-point. The three years of tortuous proceedings on the famous Appropriation clause — proceedings that political philosophers declared to have disgraced this country in the face of Europe, and that were certainly an ignominy and a scandal in a party called

[1] Newman, *Essays*, ii. p. 428.

reforming — were among the things that helped most to prepare the way for the fall of the whigs and the conservative triumph of 1841. Within ten years from the death of Canning the church transfixed the attention of the politician. The Duke of Wellington was hardly a wizard in political foresight, but he had often a good soldier's eye for things that stood straight up in front of him. 'The real question,' said the duke in 1838, 'that now divides the country and which truly divides the House of Commons, is church or no church. People talk of the war in Spain, and the Canada question. But all that is of little moment. The real question is church or no church.'

The position of the tory party as seen by its powerful recruit was, when he entered public life, a state of hopeless defeat and discomfiture. 'But in my imagination,' wrote Mr. Gladstone, 'I cast over that party a prophetic mantle and assigned to it a mission distinctly religious as the champion in the state field of that divine truth which it was the office of the Christian ministry to uphold in the church. Neither then did I, nor now can I, see on what ground this inviolability could for a moment be maintained, except the belief that the state had such a mission.' He soon discovered how hard it is to adjust to the many angles of an English political party the seamless mantle of ecclesiastical predominance.

The changes in the political constitution in 1828, in 1829, and in 1832, carried with them a deliberate recognition that the church was not the nation; that it was not identical with the parliament who spoke for the nation; that it had no longer a title to compose the governing order; and — a more startling disclosure still to the minds of churchmen — that laws affecting the church would henceforth be made by men of all churches and creeds, or even men of none. This hateful circumstance it was that inevitably began in multitudes of devout and earnest minds to produce a revolution in their conception of a church, and a resurrection in curiously altered forms of that old ideal of Milton's austere and lofty school — the ideal of a purely spiritual association that should leave each man's soul

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and conscience free from 'secular chains' and 'hireling wolves.'

Strange social conditions were emerging on every side. The factory system established itself on a startling scale. Huge aggregates of population collected with little regard to antique divisions of diocese and parish. Colonies over the sea extended in boundaries and numbers, and churchmen were zealous that these infant societies should be blessed by the same services, rites, ecclesiastical ordering and exhortation, as were believed to elevate and sanctify the parent community at home. The education of the people grew to be a formidable problem, the field of angry battles and campaigns that never end. Trade, markets, wages, hours, and all the gaunt and haggard economics of the labour question, added to the statesman's load. Pauperism was appalling. In a word, the need for social regeneration both material and moral was in the spirit of the time. Here were the hopes, vague, blind, unmeasured, formless, that had inspired the wild clamour for the bill, the whole bill, and nothing but the bill. The whig patricians carried away the prizes of great office, though the work had been done by men of a very different stamp. It was the utilitarian radicals who laid the foundations of social improvement in a reasoned creed. With admirable ability, perseverance, unselfishness, and public spirit, Bentham and his disciples had regenerated political opinion, and fought the battle against debt, pauperism, class-privilege, class-monopoly, abusive patronage, a monstrous criminal law, and all the host of sinister interests.[1] As in every reforming age, men approached the work from two sides. Evangelical religion divides with rationalism the glory of more than one humanitarian struggle. Brougham, a more potent force than we now realise, plunged with the energy of a Titan into a thousand projects, all taking for granted that ignorance is the disease and useful knowledge the universal healer, all of them secular, all dealing with man from the outside, none touching imagination or the heart. March-of-mind became to many almost as wearisome a cry as wisdom-of-our-ancestors had been. According

[1] See Sir Leslie Stephen's *English Utilitarians*, ii. p. 42.

to some eager innovators, dogma and ceremony were to go, the fabrics to be turned into mechanics' institutes, the clergy to lecture on botany and statistics. The reaction against this dusty dominion of secularity kindled new life in rival schools. They insisted that if society is to be improved and civilisation saved, it can only be through improvement in the character of man, and character is moulded and inspired by more things than are dreamed of by societies for useful knowledge. The building up of the inward man in all his parts, faculties, and aspirations, was seen to be, what in every age it is, the problem of problems. This thought turned the eyes of many — of Mr. Gladstone first among them — to the church, and stirred an endeavour to make out of the church what Coleridge describes as the sustaining, correcting, befriending opposite of the world, the compensating counterforce to the inherent and inevitable defects of the state as a state. Such was the new movement of the time between 1835 and 1845.

'It is surprising,' said Proudhon, the trenchant genius of French socialism in 1840 and onwards, 'how at the bottom of our politics we always found theology.' It is true at any rate that the association of political and social change with theological revolution was the most remarkable of all the influences in the first twenty years of Mr. Gladstone's public life. Then rose once more into active prominence the supreme debate, often cutting deep into the labours of the modern statesman, always near to the heart of the speculations of the theologian, in many fields urgent in its interest alike to ecclesiastic, historian, and philosopher, the inquiry: what is a church? This opened the sluices and let out the floods. What is the church of England? To ask that question was to ask a hundred others. Creeds, dogmas, ordinances, hierarchy, parliamentary institution, judicial tribunals, historical tradition, the prayer-book, the Bible — all these enormous topics sacred and profane, with all their countless ramifications, were rapidly swept into a tornado of such controversy as had not been seen in England since the Revolution. Was the church a purely human creation, changing with time and circumstance, like all the

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other creations of the heart and brain and will of man? Were its bishops mere officers, like high ministers of mundane state, or were they, in actual historic truth as in supposed theological necessity, the direct lineal successors of the first apostles, endowed from the beginning with the mystical prerogatives on which the efficacy of all sacramental rites depended? What were its relations to the councils of the first four centuries, what to the councils of the fifteenth century and the sixteenth, what to the Fathers? The Scottish presbyterians held the conception of a church as strongly as anybody;[1] but England, broadly speaking, had never been persuaded that there could be a church without bishops.

In the answers to this group of hard questions, terrible divisions that had been long muffled and huddled away burst into view. The stupendous quarrel of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries again broke out. To the erastian lawyer the church was an institution erected on principles of political expediency by act of parliament. To the school of Whately and Arnold it was a corporation of divine origin, devised to strengthen men in their struggle for goodness and holiness by the association and mutual help of fellow-believers. To the evangelical it was hardly more than a collection of congregations commended in the Bible for the diffusion of the knowledge and right interpretation of the Scriptures, the commemoration of gospel events, and the linking of gospel truths to a well-ordered life. To the high anglican as to the Roman catholic, the church was something very different from this; not a fabric reared by man, nor in truth any mechanical fabric at all, but a mystically appointed channel of salvation, an indispensable element in the relation between the soul of man and its creator. To be a member of it was not to join an external association, but to become an inward partaker in ineffable and mysterious graces to which no other access lay open. Such was the Church Catholic and Apostolic as set up from the beginning,

[1] 'Nowhere that I know of,' the Duke of Argyll once wrote in friendly remonstrance with Mr. Gladstone, 'is the doctrine of a separate society being of divine foundation, so dogmatically expressed as in the Scotch Confession; the 39 articles are less definite on the subject.'

and of this immense mystery, of this saving agency, of this incommensurable spiritual force, the established church of England was the local presence and the organ.

The noble restlessness of the profounder and more penetrating minds was not satisfied, any more than Bossuet had been, to think of the church as only an element in a scheme of individual salvation. They sought in it the comprehensive solution of all the riddles of life and time. Newman drew in powerful outline the sublime and sombre anarchy of human history.

This is the enigma, this the solution in faith and spirit, in which Mr. Gladstone lived and moved. In him it gave to the energies of life their meaning, and to duty its foundation. While poetic voices and the oracles of sages — Goethe, Scott, Wordsworth, Shelley, Byron, Coleridge — were drawing men one way or another, or else were leaving the void turbid and formless, he, in the midst of doubts, distractions, and fears, saw a steadfast light where the Oxford men saw it; in that concrete representation of the unseen Power that, as he believed, had made and guides and rules the world, in that Church Catholic and Apostolic which alone would have the force and the stoutness necessary to serve for a breakwater against the deluge. Yet to understand Mr. Gladstone's case, we have ever to remember that what is called the catholic revival was not in England that which the catholic counter-revolution had been on the continent of Europe, primarily a political movement. Its workings were inward, in the sphere of the mind, in thought and faith, in idealised associations of historic grandeur.[1]

II

The reader has already been told how at Rome and in Naples in 1832, Mr. Gladstone was suddenly arrested by the new idea of a church, interweaving with the whole of human life a pervading and equalised spirit of religion. Long years after, in an unfinished fragment, he began to trace the golden thread of his religious growth: —

My environment in my childhood was strictly evangelical.

[1] On this, see Fairbairn's *Catholicism, Roman and Anglican*, pp. 114-5.

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My dear and noble mother was a woman of warm piety but broken health, and I was not directly instructed by her. But I was brought up to believe that Doyly and Mant's Bible (then a standard book of the colour ruling in the church) was heretical, and that every unitarian (I suppose also every heathen) must, as matter of course, be lost forever. This deplorable servitude of mind oppressed me in a greater or less degree for a number of years. As late as in the year (I think) 1836, one of my brothers married a beautiful and in every way charming person, who had been brought up in a family of the unitarian profession, yet under a mother very sincerely religious. I went through much mental difficulty and distress at the time, as there had been no express renunciation [by her] of the ancestral creed, and I absurdly busied myself with devising this or that religious test as what if accepted might suffice.[1]

So, as will be seen, the first access of churchlike ideas to my mind by no means sufficed to expel my inherited and bigoted misconception, though in the event they did it as I hope effectively. But I long retained in my recollection an observation made to me in (I think) the year 1829, by Mrs. Benjamin Gaskell of Thornes, near Wakefield, a seed which was destined long to remain in my mind without germinating. I fell into religious conversation with this excellent woman, the mother of my Eton friend Milnes Gaskell, himself the husband of an unitarian. She said to me, Surely we cannot entertain a doubt as to the future condition of any person truly united to Christ by faith and love, whatever may be the faults of his opinions. Here she supplied me with the key to the whole question. At this hour I feel grateful to her accordingly, for the scope of her remark is very wide; and it is now my rule to remember her in prayer before the altar.

There was nothing at Eton to subvert this frame of mind; for nothing was taught us either for it or against it. But in the spring and summer of 1828, I set to work on Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*, and read it straight through. Intercourse with my elder sister Anne had increased my mental interest in religion, and she, though generally of evangelical sentiments, had an opinion that

[1] A little sheaf of curious letters on this family episode survives.

the standard divines of the English church were of great value. Hooker's exposition of the case of the church of England came to me as a mere abstraction; but I think that I found the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration, theretofore abhorred, impossible to reject, and the way was thus opened for further changes.

In like manner at Oxford, I do not doubt that in 1830 and 1831 the study of Bishop Butler laid the ground for new modes of thought in religion, but his teaching in the sermons on our moral nature was not integrated, so to speak, until several years later by larger perusal of the works of Saint Augustine. I may, however, say that I was not of a mind ill disposed to submit to authority.

The Oxford Movement, properly so called, began in the year 1833, but it had no direct effect upon me. I did not see the Tracts, and to this hour I have read but few of them. Indeed, my first impressions and emotions in connection with it were those of indignation at what I thought the rash intemperate censures pronounced by Mr. Hurrell Froude upon the reformers. My chief tie with Oxford was the close friendship I had formed in 1830 with Walter Hamilton.[1] His character, always loving and loved, had, not very greatly later, become deeply devout. But I do not think he at this time sympathised with Newman and his friends; and he had the good sense, in conjunction with Mr. Denison, afterwards bishop, to oppose the censure upon Dr. Hampden, to which I foolishly and ignorantly gave in, without, however, being an active or important participator.

But the blow struck by the prayer-book in 1832 set my mind in motion, and that motion was never arrested. I found food for the new ideas and tendencies in various quarters, not least in the religious writings of Alexander Knox, all of which I perused. Moreover, I had an inclination to ecclesiastical conformity, and obedience as such, which led me to concur with some zeal in the plans of Bishop Blomfield. In the course of two or three years, Manning turned from a strongly evangelical attitude to one as strongly anglican, and about the same time converted his acquaintance with me into a close friendship. In the same

[1] Afterwards Bishop of Salisbury.

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manner James Hope, whom I had known but slightly at Eton or Oxford, made a carefully considered change of the same kind; which also became the occasion of a fast friendship. Both these intimacies led me forward; Hope especially had influence over me, more than I think any other person at any period of my life.[1]

When I was preparing in 1837–8 *The State in its Relations with the Church*, he took a warm interest in the work, which, during my absence on the continent, he corrected for the press. His attitude towards the work, however, included a desire that its propositions should be carried further. The temper of the times among young educated men was working in the same direction. I had no low churchmen among my near friends, except Walter Farquhar. Anstice, a great loss, died very early in his beautiful married life. While I was busy about my book, Hope made known to me Palmer's work on the Church, which had just appeared. I read it with care and great interest. It took hold upon me; and gave me at once the clear, definite, and strong conception of the church which, through all the storm and strain of a most critical period, has proved for me entirely adequate to every emergency, and saved me from all vacillation. I did not, however, love the extreme rigour of the book in its treatment of non-episcopal communions. It was not very long after this, I think in 1842, that I reduced into form my convictions of the large and important range of subjects which recent controversy had brought into prominence. I conceive that in the main Palmer completed for me the work which inspection of the prayer-book had begun.

Before referring further to my 'redaction' of opinions, I desire to say that at this moment I am as closely an adherent to the doctrines of grace generally, and to the general sense of Saint Augustine, as at the date from which this narrative set out. I hope that my mind has dropped nothing affirmative. But I hope also that there has been dropped from it all the damnatory part of the opinions taught by the evangelical school; not only as regards the Roman catholic religion, but also as to heretics and heathens; nonconformists and presbyterians I think that I always let off pretty easily. . . .

[1] Marrying Walter Scott's granddaughter (1847) he was named Hope-Scott after 1853.

III



The Tractarian movement is by this time one of the most familiar chapters in our history, and it has had singular good fortune in being told by three masters of the most winning, graphic, and melodious English prose of the century to which the tale belongs.[1] Whether we call it by the ill name of Oxford counter-reformation or the friendlier name of catholic revival, it remains a striking landmark in the varied motions of English religious thought and feeling for the three-quarters of a century since the still unfinished journey first began. In its early stages, the movement was exclusively theological. Philanthropic reform still remained with the evangelical school that so powerfully helped to sweep away the slave trade, cleansed the prisons, and aided in humanising the criminal law. It was they who 'helped to form a conscience, if not a heart, in the callous bosom of English politics,' while the very foremost of the Oxford divines was scouting the fine talk about black men, because they 'concentrated in themselves all the whiggery, dissent, cant, and abomination that had been ranged on their side.'[2] Nor can we forget that Shaftesbury, the leader in that beneficent crusade of human mercy and national wisdom which ended in the deliverance of women and children in mines and factories, was also a leader of the evangelical party.

The Tractarian movement, as all know, opened, among other sources, in antagonism to utilitarian liberalism. Yet J. S. Mill, the oracle of rationalistic liberalism in Oxford and other places in the following generation, had always much to say for the Tractarians. He used to tell us that the Oxford theologians had done for England something like what Guizot, Villemain, Michelet, Cousin had

[1] The *Apologia* of its leader; Froude, *Short Studies*, vol. iv.; and Dean Church's *Oxford Movement*, 1833–45, a truly fascinating book — called by Mr. Gladstone a great and noble book. 'It has all the delicacy,' he says, 'the insight into the human mind, heart, and character, which were Newman's great endowment; but there is a pervading sense of soundness about it which Newman, great as he was, never inspired.'

[2] See Dr. Fairbairn's *Catholicism, Roman and Anglican*, p. 292. Pusey speaks of our 'paying twenty millions for a theory about slavery' (Liddon, *Life of Pusey*, iii. p. 172).

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done a little earlier for France; they had opened, broadened, deepened the issues and meanings of European history; they had reminded us that history is European; that it is quite unintelligible if treated as merely local. He would say, moreover, that thought should recognise thought and mind always welcome mind; and the Oxford men had at least brought argument, learning, and even philosophy of a sort, to break up the narrow and frigid conventions of reigning system in church and college, in pulpits and professorial chairs. They had made the church ashamed of the evil of her ways, they had determined that spirit of improvement from within 'which, if this sect-ridden country is ever really to be taught, must proceed *pari passu* with assault from without.'[1]

One of the ablest of the Oxford writers talking of the non-jurors, remarks how very few of the movements that are attended with a certain romance, and thus bias us for a time in their favour, will stand full examination; they so often reveal some gross offence against common sense.[2] Want of common sense is not the particular impression left by the Tractarians, after we have put aside the plausible dialectic and winning periods of the leader, and proceed to look at the effect, not on their general honesty but on their intellectual integrity, of their most peculiar situation and the methods which they believed that situation to impose. Nobody will be so presumptuous or uncharitable as to deny that among the divines of the Oxford movement were men as pure in soul, as fervid lovers of truth, as this world ever possessed. On the other hand it would be nothing short of a miracle in human nature, if all that dreadful tangle of economies and reserves, so largely practised and for a long time so insidiously defended, did not familiarise a vein of subtlety, a tendency to play fast and loose with words, a perilous disposition to regard the non-natural sense of language as if it were just as good as the natural, a willingness to be satisfied with a bare and rigid logical consistency of expression, without respect to the interpretation that was sure to be put upon that expression by the hearer and the

[1] *Dissertations*, i. p. 444.

[2] J. B. Mozley's *Letters*, p. 234.

reader. The strain of their position in all these respects made Newman and his allies no exemplary school. Their example has been, perhaps rightly, held to account for something that was often under the evil name of sophistry suspected and disliked in Mr. Gladstone himself, in his speeches, his writings, and even in his public acts.

It is true that to the impartial eye Newman is no worse than teachers in antagonistic sects; he is, for instance, no subtler than Maurice. The theologian who strove so hard in the name of anglican unity to develop all the catholic elements and hide out of sight all the calvinistic, was not driven to any hardier exploits of verbal legerdemain, than the theologian who strove against all reason and clear thinking to devise common formulæ that should embrace both catholic and calvinistic explanations together, or indeed anything else that anybody might choose to bring to the transfusing alchemy of his rather smoky crucible. Nor was the third, and at that moment the strongest, of the church parties at Oxford and in the country, well able to fling stones at the other two. What better right, it was asked, had low churchmen to shut their eyes to the language of rubrics, creeds, and offices, than the high churchmen had to twist the language of the articles?

The confusion was grave and it was unfathomable. Newman fought a skilful and persistent fight against liberalism, as being nothing else than the egregious doctrine that there is no positive truth in religion, and that one creed is as good as another. Dr. Arnold, on the other hand, denounced Newmanism as idolatry; declared that if you let in the little finger of tradition, you would soon have in the whole monster, horns and tail and all; and even complained of the English divines in general, with the noble exceptions of Butler and Hooker, that he found in them a want of believing or disbelieving anything because it was true or false, as if that were a question that never occurred to them.[1] The plain man, who was but a poor master either of theology or of the history of the church of England, but who loved the prayer-book and hated confession, convents,

[1] Stanley's *Life of Arnold*, ii. p. 56 *n*.

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priest-craft, and mariolatry, was wrought to madness by a clergyman who should describe himself, as did R. H. Froude, as a catholic without the popery, and a church of England man without the protestantism. The plain man knew that he was not himself clever enough to form any distinct idea of what such talk meant. But then his helplessness only deepened his conviction that the more distinct his idea might become, the more intense would his aversion be, both to the thing meant and to the surpliced conjurer who, as he bitterly supposed, was by sophistic tricks trying hard to take him in.

Other portents were at the same time beginning to disturb the world. The finds and the theories of geologists made men uncomfortable, and brought down sharp anathemas. Wider speculations on cosmic and creative law came soon after, and found their way into popular reading.[1] In prose literature, in subtler forms than the verse of Shelley, new dissolving elements appeared that were destined to go far. Schleiermacher, between 1820 and 1830, opened the sluices of the theological deep, whether to deluge or to irrigate. In 1830 an alarming note was sounded in the publication by a learned clergyman of a history of the Jews. We have seen (p. 56) how Mr. Gladstone was horrified by it. Milman's book was the beginning of a new rationalism within the fold. A line of thought was opened that seemed to make the history of religious ideas more interesting than their truth. The special claims of an accepted creed were shaken by disclosing an unmistakeable family likeness to creeds abhorred. A belief was deemed to be accounted for and its sanctity dissolved, by referring it historically to human origins, and showing it to be only one branch of a genealogical trunk. Historic explanation became a graver peril than direct attack.

IV

The first skirmish in a dire conflict that is not even now over or near its end happened in 1836. Lord Melbourne recommended for the chair of divinity at Oxford Dr. Hampden,

[1] The *Vestiges of Creation* appeared in 1844.

a divine whose clumsy handling of nice themes had brought him, much against his intention, under suspicion of unsound doctrine, and who was destined eleven years later to find himself the centre of a still louder uproar. Evangelicals and Tractarians flew to arms, and the two hosts who were soon to draw their swords upon one another, now for the first time, if not the last, swarmed forth together side by side against the heretic. What was rather an affront than a penalty was inflicted upon Hampden by a majority of some five to one of the masters of arts of the university, and in accord with that majority, as he has just told us, though he did not actually vote, was Mr. Gladstone. Twenty years after, when he had risen to be a shining light in the world's firmament, he wrote to Hampden to express regret for the injustice of which in this instance 'the forward precipitancy of youth' had made him guilty.[1] The case of Hampden gave a sharp actuality to the question of the relations of church and crown. The particular quarrel was of secondary importance, but it brought home to the high churchmen what might be expected in weightier matters than the affair of Dr. Hampden from whig ministers, and confirmed the horrible apprehension that whig ministers might possibly have to fill all the regius chairs and all the sees for a whole generation to come.

Not less important than the theology of the Oxford divines in its influence on Mr. Gladstone's line of thought upon things ecclesiastical was the speculation of Coleridge on the teaching and polity of a national church. His fertile book on *Church and State* was given to the world in 1830, four years before his death, and this and the ideas proceeding from it were the mainspring, if not of the theology of the movement, at least of Mr. Gladstone's first marked contribution to the stirring controversies of the time. He has described the profound effect upon his mind of another book, the *Treatise on the Church of Christ*, by William Palmer of Worcester College (1838), and to the end of his life it held its place in his mind among the most masterly performances of the day in the twin hemispheres of theology and church

[1] The letter will be found at the end of the chapter.

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polity.[1] Newman applauded the book for its magnificence of design, and undoubtedly it covers much ground, including a stiff rejection of Locke's theory of toleration, and the assertion of the strong doctrine that the Christian prince has a right by temporal penalties to protect the church from the gathering together of the froward and the insurrection of wicked doers. It has at least the merit, so far from universal in the polemics of that day, of clear language, definite propositions, and formal arguments capable of being met by a downright yes or no.[2] The question, however, that has often slumbered yet never dies, of the right relations between the Christian prince or state and the Christian church, was rapidly passing away from logicians of the cloister.

Note to page 167.

'*Hawarden, Chester, November* 9, 1856. — My Lord Bishop, — Your lordship will probably be surprised at receiving a letter from me, as a stranger. The simple purpose of it is to discharge a debt of the smallest possible importance to you, yet due I think from me, by expressing the regret with which I now look back on my concurrence in a vote of the University of Oxford in the year 1836, condemnatory of some of your lordship's publications. I did not take actual part in the vote; but upon reference to a journal kept at the time, I find that my absence was owing to an accident.

'For a good many years past I have found myself ill able to master books of an abstract character, and I am far from pretending to be competent at this time to form a judgment on the merits of any propositions then at issue. I have learned, indeed, that many things which, in the forward precipitancy of my youth, I should have condemned, are either in reality sound, or lie within the just limits of such discussion as especially befits an University. But that which (after a delay, due, I think, to the cares and pressing occupations of political life) brought back to my mind the injustice of which I had unconsciously been guilty in 1836, was my being called upon, as a member of the Council of King's College in London, to concur in a measure similar in principle with respect to Mr. Maurice; that is to say, in a condemnation couched in general terms which did not really declare the point of imputed guilt, and against which perfect innocence could have no defence. I resisted to the best of my power, though ineffectually, the grievous wrong done to Mr. Maurice, and urged that the charges should be made distinct, that all the best means of investigation should be brought to bear on them, ample opportunity given for defence, and a reference then made, if needful, to the Bishop in his proper capacity. But the majority of laymen in the Council were inexorable. It was only, as I have said, after mature reflection that I came to perceive the bearing of the case on that of 1836, and to find that by my resistance I had condemned myself. I then lamented very sincerely that I had not on that occasion, now so remote, felt and acted in a different manner.

'I beg your lordship to accept this expression of my cordial regret, and to allow me to subscribe myself, very respectfully, your obedient and humble servant, W. E. Gladstone.'[3]

[1] See his article in the *Nineteenth Century* for August, 1894, where he calls Palmer's book the most powerful and least assailable defence of the position of the anglican church from the sixteenth century downwards.

[2] See Church, *Oxford Movement*, pp. 214–6.

[3] This letter is printed in the *Life of Hampden* (1876), p. 199.

# CHAPTER V

## HIS FIRST BOOK

*(1838–1839)*

> The union [with the State] is to the Church of secondary though great importance. *Her* foundations are on the holy hills. Her charter is legibly divine. She, if she should be excluded from the precinct of government, may still fulfil all her functions, and carry them out to perfection. Her condition would be anything rather than pitiable, should she once more occupy the position which she held before the reign of Constantine. But the State, in rejecting her, would actively violate its most solemn duty, and would, if the theory of the connection be sound, entail upon itself a curse. — Gladstone (1838).



According to Mr. Gladstone, a furore for church establishment came down upon the conservative squadrons between 1835 and 1838. He describes it as due especially to the activity of the presbyterian established church of Scotland before the disruption, and especially to the 'zealous and truly noble propagandism of Dr. Chalmers, a man with the energy of a giant and the simplicity of a child.' In 1837, Mr. Gladstone says in one of the many fragments written when in his later years he mused over the past, 'we had a movement for fresh parliamentary grants to build churches in Scotland. The leaders did not seem much to like it, but had to follow. I remember dining at Sir R. Peel's with the Scotch deputation. It included Collins, a church bookseller of note, who told me that no sermon ought ever to fall short of an hour, for in less time than that it was not possible to explain any text of the Holy Scripture.'

In the spring of 1838, the mighty Chalmers was persuaded to cross the border and deliver in London half a dozen discourses to vindicate the cause of ecclesiastical establish-

BOOK II. 1838.

ments. The rooms in Hanover Square were crowded to suffocation by intense audiences mainly composed of the governing class. Princes of the blood were there, high prelates of the church, great nobles, leading statesmen, and a throng of members of the House of Commons, from both sides of it. The orator was seated, but now and again in the kindling excitement of his thought, he rose unconsciously to his feet, and by ringing phrase or ardent gesture roused a whirlwind of enthusiasm such that vehement bystanders assure us it could not be exceeded in the history of human eloquence.[1] In Chalmers' fulminating energy, the mechanical polemics of an appropriation clause in a parliamentary bill assume a passionate and living air. He had warned his northern flock, 'should the disaster ever befall us, of vulgar and upstart politicians becoming lords of the ascendant, and an infidel or demi-infidel government wielding the destinies of this mighty empire, and should they be willing at the shrines of their own wretched partizanship to make sacrifice of those great and hallowed institutions which were consecrated by our ancestors to the maintenance of religious truth and religious liberty, — should in particular the monstrous proposition ever be entertained to abridge the legal funds for the support of protestantism, — let us hope that there is still enough, not of fiery zeal, but of calm, resolute, enlightened principle in the land to resent the outrage — enough of energy and reaction in the revolted sense of this great country to meet and overbear it.'

The impression made by all this on Mr. Gladstone he has himself described in an autobiographic note of 1897 : —

> The primary idea of my early politics was the church. With this was connected the idea of the establishment, as being everything except essential. When therefore Dr. Chalmers came to London to lecture on the principle of church establishments, I attended as a loyal hearer. I had a profound respect for the lecturer, with whom I had had the honour of a good deal of acquaintance during winter residences in Edinburgh, and some correspondence by letter. I was in my earlier twenties, and he

[1] Hanna's *Life of Chalmers*, iv. pp. 37–46.

near his sixties [he was 58], with a high and merited fame for eloquence and character. He subscribed his letters to me 'respectfully' (or 'most respectfully') yours, and puzzled me extremely in the effort to find out what suitable mode of subscription to use in return. Unfortunately the basis of his lectures was totally unsound. Parliament as being Christian was bound to know and establish the truth. But not being made of theologians, it could not follow the truth into its minuter shadings, and must proceed upon broad lines. Fortunately these lines were ready to hand. There was a religious system which, taken in the rough, was truth. This was known as protestantism: and to its varieties it was not the business of the legislature to have regard. On the other side lay a system which, taken again in the rough, was not truth but error. This system was known as popery. Parliament therefore was bound to establish and endow some kind of protestantism, and not to establish or endow popery.

In a letter to Manning (May 14, 1838) he puts the case more bluntly: —

Such a jumble of church, un-church, and anti-church principles as that excellent and eloquent man Dr. Chalmers has given us in his recent lectures, no human being ever heard, and it can only be compared to the state of things —

Ante mare et terras et quod tegit omnia cœlum.[1]

He thinks that the State has not cognisance of spirituals, except upon a broad simple principle like that which separates popery from protestantism, namely that protestantism receives the word of God only, popery the word of God and the word of man alike — it is easy, he says, such being the alternatives, to judge which is preferable. He flogged the apostolic succession grievously, seven bishops sitting below him: London, Winchester, Chester, Oxford, Llandaff, Gloucester, Exeter, and the Duke of Cambridge incessantly bobbing assent; but for fear we should be annoyed he then turned round on the cathedrals plan and flogged it with at least equal vigour. He has a mind keenly susceptible of what is beautiful, great, and good; tenacious of an idea when once grasped, and with a singular power of concentrating the

[1] Ovid, *Met.* i. 5. — Chaos, before sea and land and all-covering skies.

BOOK II. 1838.

whole man upon it. But unfortunately I do not believe he has ever looked in the face the real doctrine of the visible church and the apostolic succession, or has any idea what is the matter at issue.

Mr. Gladstone says he could not stand the undisputed currency in conservative circles of a theory like this, and felt that the occasion ought to be seized for further entrenching the existing institution, strong as it seemed in fact, by more systematic defences in principle and theory. He sat down to the literary task with uncommon vigour and persistency. His object was not merely to show that the state has a conscience, for not even the newest of new Machiavellians denies that a state is bound by some moral obligations, though in history and fact it is true that

> Earth is sick,
> And Heaven is weary, of the hollow words
> Which States and Kingdoms utter when they talk
> Of truth and justice.[1]

But the obligation of conscience upon a state was not Mr. Gladstone's only point. His propositions were, that the state is cognisant of the difference between religious truth and religious error: that the propagation of this truth and the discouragement of this error are among the ends for which government exists ; that the English state did recognise as a fundamental duty to give an active and exclusive support to a certain religion ; and finally that the condition of things resulting from the discharge of this duty was well worth preserving against encroachment, from whatever quarter encroachment might threaten.

On July 23rd, the draft of his book was at last finished, and he dispatched it to James Hope for free criticism, suggestions, and revision. The 'physical state of the MS.,' as Mr. Gladstone calls it, seems to have been rather indefensible, and his excuse for writing 'irregularly and confusedly, considering the pressure of other engagements' — an excuse somewhat too common with him — was not quite so valid as he seems to have thought it. 'The defects,' writes Hope, 'are such as must almost necessarily occur when a great

[1] *Excursion*, v.

subject is handled piecemeal and at intervals; and I should recommend, with a view to remedying them, that you procure the whole to be copied out in a good legible hand with blank pages, and that you read it through in this shape once connectedly, with a view to the whole argument, and again with a view to examining the structure of each part.'[1] Hope took as much trouble with the argument and structure of the book as if he were himself its author. For many weeks the fervid toil went on.

The strain on his eyesight that had embarrassed Mr. Gladstone for several months now made abstinence from incessant reading and writing necessary, and he was ordered to travel. He first settled with his sister at Ems (August 15th), whither the proofs of his book with Hope's annotations followed, nor did he finally get rid of the burden until the middle of September. The tedium of life in hotels was almost worse than the tedium of revising proofs, and at Milan and Florence he was strongly tempted to return home, as the benefit was problematical; it was even doubtful whether pictures were any less trying to his eyes than books. He made the acquaintance of one celebrated writer of the time. 'I went to see Manzoni,' he says, 'in his house some six or eight miles from Milan in 1838. He was a most interesting man, but was regarded, as I found, among the more fashionable priests in Milan as a *bacchettone* [hypocrite]. In his own way he was, I think, a liberal and a nationalist, nor was the alliance of such politics with strong religious convictions uncommon among the more eminent Italians of those days.'

October found him in Sicily,[2] where he travelled with Sir Stephen Glynne and his two sisters, and here we shall soon see that with one of these sisters a momentous thing came to pass. It was at Catania that he first heard of the publication of his book. A month or more was passed in Rome in company with Manning, and together they visited Wiseman, Manning's conversion still thirteen years off. Macaulay too, now eight-and-thirty, was at Rome that winter. 'On

[1] *Memoirs of J. R. Hope-Scott*, i. p. 150, where an adequate portion of the correspondence is to be found.

[2] He wrote an extremely graphic account of their ascent of Mount Etna, which has since found a place in Murray's handbook for Sicily.

BOOK II. 1839.

Christmas Eve,' he says, 'I found Gladstone in the throng, and I accosted him, as we had met, though we had never been introduced to each other. We talked and walked together in St. Peter's during the best part of an afternoon. He is both a clever and an amiable man. . . .' At Rome, as the state of his eyesight forbade too close resort to picture galleries and museums, he listened to countless sermons, all carefully recorded in his diary. Dr. Wiseman gave him a lesson in the missal. On his birthday he went with Manning to hear mass with the pope's choir, and they were placed on the bench behind the cardinals. At St. Peter's he recalled that there his first conception of the unity of the church had come into his mind, and the desire for its attainment — 'an object in every human sense hopeless, but not therefore the less to be desired, for the horizon of human hope is not that of divine power and wisdom. That idea has been upon the whole, I believe, the ruling one of my life during the period that has since elapsed.' On January 19, he bade 'a reluctant adieu to the mysterious city, whither he should repair who wishes to renew for a time the dream of life.'

A few years later Mr. Gladstone noted some differences between English and Italian preaching that are of interest:—

> The fundamental distinction between English and Italian preaching is, I think, this: the mind of the English preacher, or reader of sermons, however impressive, is fixed mainly upon his composition, that of the Italian on his hearers. The Italian is a man applying himself by his rational and persuasive organs to men, in order to move them; the former is a man applying himself, with his best ability in many cases, to a fixed form of matter, in order to *make it* move those whom he addresses. The action in the one case is warm, living, direct, immediate, from heart to heart; in the other it is transfused through a medium comparatively torpid. The first is surely far superior to the second in truth and reality. The preacher bears an awful message. Such messengers, if sent with authority, are too much identified with, and possessed by, that which they carry, to view it objectively during its delivery, it absorbs their very being and

all its energies, they *are* their message, and they see nothing extrinsic to themselves except those to whose hearts they desire to bring it. In truth, what we want is the following of nature, and her genial development. (March 20, Palm Sunday, '42.)

II

It was the end of January (1839) before Mr. Gladstone arrived in London, and by that time his work had been out for six or seven weeks.[1] On his return we may be sure that his book and its fortunes were the young author's most lively interest. Church authorities and the clergy generally, so far as he could learn, approved, many of them very warmly. The Bishop of London wrote this, and the Archbishop of Canterbury said it. It is easy to understand with what interest and delight the average churchman would welcome so serious a contribution to the good cause, so bold an effort by so skilled a hand, by lessons from history, by general principles of national probity and a national religion, and by well-digested materials gathered, as Hooker gathered his, 'from the characteristic circumstances of the time,' to support the case for ecclesiastical privilege. Anglicans of the better sort had their intellectual self-respect restored in Mr. Gladstone's book, by finding that they need no longer subsist on the dregs of Eldonian prejudice, but could sustain themselves in intellectual dignity and affluence by large thoughts and sonorous phrases upon the nature of human society as a grand whole.[2] Even unconvinced whigs who quarrelled with the arguments, admitted that the tories had found in the young member for Newark a well-read scholar, with extraordinary amplitude of mind, a man who knew what reasoning meant, and a man who knew how to write.

The first chapter dealing with establishment drew forth premature praise from many who condemned the succeeding chapters setting out high notions as to the church. From both universities he had favourable accounts. 'From Scotland they are mixed; those which are most definite

[1] Of the first edition some 1500 or 1750 copies were sold.

[2] *Memoirs of J. R. Hope-Scott*, i. p. 172.

BOOK II. 1839.

tend to show there is considerable soreness, at which, God knows, I am not surprised; but I have not sought nor desired it.' The Germans on the whole approved. Bunsen was exuberant; there was nobody, he said, with whom he so loved *συμφιλοσοφεῖν καὶ συμφιλολογεῖν*; people have too much to do about themselves to have time to seek truth on its own account; the greater, therefore, the merit of the writer who forces his age to decide, whether they will serve God or Baal. Gladstone is the first man in England as to intellectual power, he cried, and he has heard higher tones than any one else in this land. The Crown Prince of Prussia sent him civil messages, and meant to have the book translated. Rogers, the poet, wrote that his mother was descended from stout nonconformists, that his father was perverted to his mother's heresies, and that therefore he himself could not be zealous in the cause; but, however that might be, of this Mr. Gladstone might be very sure, that he would love and admire the author of the book as much as ever. The Duke of Newcastle expected much satisfaction; meanwhile declared it to be a national duty to provide churches and pastors; parliament should vote even millions and millions; then dissent would uncommonly soon disappear, and a blessing would fall upon the land. Dr. Arnold told his friends how much he admired the spirit of the book throughout, how he liked the substance of half of it, how erroneous he thought the other half. Wordsworth pronounced it worthy of all attention, doubted whether the author had not gone too far about apostolical descent; but then, like the sage that he was, the poet admitted that he must know a great deal more ecclesiastical history, be better read in the Fathers, and read the book itself over again, before he could feel any right to criticise.[1]

[1] Carlyle wrote to Emerson (Feb. 8, 1839): One of the strangest things about these New England Orations (Emerson's) is a fact I have heard, but not yet seen, that a certain W. Gladstone, an Oxford crack scholar, tory M.P., and devout churchman of great talent and hope, has contrived to insert a piece of you (*first* Oration it must be) in a work of his own on *Church and State*, which makes some figure at present! I know him for a solid, serious, silent-minded man; but how with his Coleridge shovel-hattism he has contrived to relate himself to *you*, there

His political leaders had as yet not spoken a word. On February 9th, Mr. Gladstone dined at Sir Robert Peel's. 'Not a word from him, Stanley, or Graham yet, even to acknowledge my poor book; but no change in manner, certainly none in Peel or Graham.' Monckton Milnes had been to Drayton, and told how the great man there had asked impatiently why anybody with so fine a career before him should go out of his way to write books. 'Sir Robert Peel,' says Mr. Gladstone, 'who was a religious man, was wholly anti-church and unclerical, and largely undogmatic. I feel that Sir R. Peel must have been quite perplexed in his treatment of me after the publication of the book, partly through his own fault, for by habit and education he was quite incapable of comprehending the movement in the church, the strength it would reach, and the exigencies it would entail. Lord Derby, I think, early began to escape from the erastian yoke which weighed upon Peel. Lord Aberdeen was, I should say, altogether enlightened in regard to it and had cast it off: so that he obtained from some the sobriquet (during his ministry) of "the presbyterian Puseyite."' Even Mr. Gladstone's best friends trembled for the effect of his ecclesiastical zeal upon his powers of political usefulness, and to the same effect was the general talk of the town. The common suspicion that the writer was doing the work of the hated Puseyites grew darker and spread further. Then in April came Macaulay's article in the *Edinburgh*, setting out with his own incomparable directness, pungency, and effect, all the arguments on the side of that popular antagonism which was rooted far less in specific reasoning than in a general anti-sacerdotal instinct that lies deep in the hearts of Englishmen. John Sterling called the famous article the assault of an equipped and practised sophist against a crude young platonist, who happens by accident to have been taught the hard and broken dialect of Aristotle rather than the deep, continuous, and musical flow of his true and ultimate master.

is the mystery. True men of all creeds, it *would* seem, are brothers. — *Correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson*, i. p. 217.

There is more than one reference to Emerson in Mr. Gladstone's book, *e.g.* i. pp. 25, 130.

BOOK II. 1839.

Author and critic exchanged magnanimous letters worthy of two great and honourable men.[1] Not the least wonderful thing about Macaulay's review is that he should not have seen how many of his own most trenchant considerations told no more strongly against Mr. Gladstone's theory, than they told against that whig theory of establishment which at the end of his article he himself tried to set up in its place.

Praise indeed came, and praise that no good man could have treated with indifference, from men like Keble, and it came from other quarters whence it was perhaps not quite so welcome, and not much more dangerous. He heard (March 19) that the Duke of Sussex, at Lord Durham's, had been strongly condemning the book; and by an odd contrast just after, as he was standing in conversation with George Sinclair, O'Connell with evident purpose came up and began to thank him for a most valuable work; for the doctrine of the authority of the church and infallibility in essentials — a great approximation to the church of Rome — an excellent sign in one who if he lived, etc. etc. It did not go far enough for the Roman catholic Archbishop of Tuam; but Dr. Murray, the Archbishop of Dublin, was delighted with it; he termed it an honest book, while as to the charges against romanism Mr. Gladstone was misinformed. 'I merely said I was very glad to approximate to any one on the ground of *truth; i.e.* rejoiced when truth immediately wrought out, in whatever degree, its own legitimate result of unity. O'Connell said he claimed half of me. . . . Count Montalembert came to me to-day (March 23rd), and sat long, for the purpose of ingenuously and kindly impugning certain statements in my book, viz. (1) That the peculiar tendency of the policy of romanism before the reformation went to limit in the mass of men intellectual exercise upon religion. (2) That the doctrine of purgatory adjourned until after death, more or less, the idea and practice of the practical work of religion. (3) That the Roman catholic church restricts the reading of the scriptures by the Christian people. He

[1] The letters are given in full in *Gleanings*, vii. p. 106. See also Trevelyan's *Macaulay*, chap. viii.

spoke of the evils; I contended we had a balance of good, and that the idea of duty in individuals was more developed here than in pure Roman catholic countries.'

All was of no avail. 'Scarcely had my work issued from the press,' wrote Mr. Gladstone thirty years later, 'when I became aware that there was no party, no section of a party, no individual person probably, in the House of Commons, who was prepared to act upon it. I found myself the last man on a sinking ship.' Exclusive support to the established religion of the country had been the rule; 'but when I bade it live, it was just about to die. It was really a quickened, not a deadened conscience, in the country, that insisted on enlarging the circle of state support.'[1] The result was not wholly unexpected, for in the summer of 1838 while actually writing the book, he records that he 'told Pusey for himself alone, I thought my own church and state principles within one stage of being hopeless as regards success in this generation.'

Another set of fragmentary notes, composed in 1894, and headed 'Some of my Errors,' contains a further passage that points in a significant direction: —

> Oxford had not taught me, nor had any other place or person, the value of liberty as an essential condition of excellence in human things. True, Oxford had supplied me with the means of applying a remedy to this mischief, for she had undoubtedly infused into my mind the love of truth as a dominant and supreme motive of conduct. But this it took long to develop into its proper place and function. It may, perhaps, be thought that among these errors I ought to record the publication in 1838 of my first work, *The State in its Relation with the Church*. Undoubtedly that work was written in total disregard or rather ignorance of the conditions under which alone political action was possible in matters of religion. It involved me personally in a good deal of embarrassment. . . . In the sanguine fervour of youth, having now learned something about the nature of the church and its office, and noting the many symptoms of revival and reform within her borders, I dreamed that she was capable of recovering

[1] Chapter of Autobiography, 1868. — *Gleanings*, vii. p. 115.

BOOK II. 1841.

lost ground, and of bringing back the nation to unity in her communion. A notable projection from the ivory gate,

'Sed falsa ad cœlum mittunt insomnia manes.'[1]

From these points of view the effort seems contemptible. But I think that there is more to be said. The land was overspread with a thick curtain of prejudice. The foundations of the historic church of England, except in the minds of a few divines, were obscured. The evangelical movement, with all its virtues and merits, had the vice of individualising religion in degree perhaps unexampled, and of rendering the language of holy scripture about Mount Sion and the kingdom of heaven little better than a jargon. . . . To meet the demands of the coming time, it was a matter of vital necessity to cut a way through all this darkness to a clearer and more solid position. Immense progress has been made in that direction during my lifetime, and I am inclined to hope that my book imparted a certain amount of stimulus to the public mind, and made some small contribution to the needful process in its earliest stage.

In the early pages of this very book, Mr. Gladstone says, that the union of church and state is to the church of secondary though great importance; *her* foundations are on the holy hills and her condition would be no pitiable one, should she once more occupy the position that she held before the reign of Constantine.[2] Faint echo of the unforgotten lines in which Dante cries out to Constantine what woes his fatal dower to the papacy had brought down on religion and mankind.[3] In these sentences lay a germ that events were speedily to draw towards maturity, a foreshadowing of the supreme principle that neither Oxford nor any other place had yet taught him, 'the value of liberty as an essential condition of excellence in human things.'

This revelation only turned his zeal for religion as the paramount issue of the time and of all times into another channel. Feeling the overwhelming strength of the tide that was running against his view of what he counted vital aspects of the

[1] *Aeneid*, vi. 896. But through the ivory gate the shades send to the upper air apparitions that do but cheat us.

[2] Chapter i. p. 5.

[3] *Inferno*, xix. 115–7.

church as a national institution, he next flew to the new task of working out the doctrinal mysteries that this institution embodied, and with Mr. Gladstone to work out a thing in his own mind always meant to expound and to enforce for the minds of others. His pen was to him at once as sword and as buckler; and while the book on *Church and State*, though exciting lively interest, was evidently destined to make no converts in theory and to be pretty promptly cast aside in practice, he soon set about a second work on *Church Principles*. It is true that with the tenacious instinct of a born controversialist, he still gave a good deal of time to constructing buttresses for the weaker places that had been discovered by enemies or by himself in the earlier edifice, and in 1841 he published a revised version of *Church and State*.[1] But ecclesiastical discussion was by then taking a new shape, and the fourth edition fell flat. Of *Church Principles*, we may say that it was stillborn. Lockhart said of it, that though a hazy writer, Gladstone showed himself a considerable divine, and it was a pity that he had entered parliament instead of taking orders. The divinity, however, did not attract. The public are never very willing to listen to a political layman discussing the arcana of theology, and least of all were they inclined to listen to him about the new-found arcana of anglo-catholic theology. As Macaulay said, this time it was a theological treatise, not an essay upon important questions of government; and the intrepid reviewer rightly sought a more fitting subject for his magician's gifts in the dramatists of the Restoration. Newman said of it, 'Gladstone's book is not open to the objections I feared; it is doctrinaire, and (I think) somewhat self-confident; but it will do good.'

III

A few sentences more will set before us the earliest of his transitions, and its gradual dates. He is writing about the first election at Newark: —

It was a curious piece of experience to a youth in his twenty-third year, young of his age, who had seen little or nothing of the

[1] It was translated into German and published, with a preface by Tholuck, in 1843.

BOOK II. 1842–3.

world, who resigned himself to politics, but whose desire had been for the ministry of God. The remains of this desire operated unfortunately. They made me tend to glorify in an extravagant manner and degree not only the religious character of the state, which in reality stood low, but also the religious mission of the conservative party. There was in my eyes a certain element of Antichrist in the Reform Act, and that act was cordially hated, though the leaders soon perceived that there would be no step backward. It was only under the second government of Sir Robert Peel that I learned how impotent and barren was the conservative office for the church, though that government was formed of men able, upright, and extremely well-disposed. It was well for me that the unfolding destiny carried me off in a considerable degree from political ecclesiasticism of which I should at that time have made a sad mess. Providence directed that my mind should find its food in other pastures than those in which my youthfulness would have loved to seek it. I went beyond the general views of the tory party in state churchism, . . . it was my opinion that as to religions other than those of the state, the state should tolerate only and not pay. So I was against salaries for prison chaplains not of the church, and I applied a logic plaster to all difficulties. . . . So that Macaulay . . . was justified in treating me as belonging to the ultra section of the tories, had he limited himself to ecclesiastical questions.

In 1840, when he received Manning's imprimatur for *Church Principles*, he notes how hard the time and circumstances were in which he had to steer his little bark. 'But the polestar is clear. Reflection shows me that a political position is mainly valuable as instrumental for the good of the church, and under this rule every question becomes one of detail only.' By 1842 reflection had taken him a step further: —

I now approach the *mezzo del cammin ;* my years glide away. It is time to look forward to the close, and I do look forward. My life . . . has two prospective objects, for which I hope the performance of my present public duties may, if not qualify, yet extrinsically enable me. One, the adjustment of certain relations

of the church to the state. Not that I think the action of the latter can be harmonised to the laws of the former. We have passed the point at which that was possible. . . . But it would be much if the state would honestly aim at enabling the church to develop her own intrinsic means. To this I look. The second is, unfolding the catholic system within her in some establishment or machinery looking both towards the higher life, and towards the external warfare against ignorance and depravity.

In the autumn of 1843, Mr. Gladstone explains to his father the relative positions of secular and church affairs in his mind, and this is only a few months after what to most men is the absorbing moment of accession to cabinet and its responsibilities. 'I contemplate secular affairs,' he says, 'chiefly as a means of being useful in church affairs, though I likewise think it right and prudent not to meddle in church matters for any small reason. I am not making known anything new to you. . . . These were the sentiments with which I entered public life, and although I do not at all repent of [having entered it, and] am not disappointed in the character of the employments it affords, certainly the experience of them in no way and at no time has weakened my original impressions.' At the end of 1843 he reached what looked like a final stage: —

Of public life, I certainly must say, every year shows me more and more that the idea of Christian politics cannot be realised in the state according to its present conditions of existence. For purposes sufficient, I believe, but partial and finite, I am more than content to be where I am. But the perfect freedom of the new covenant can only, it seems to me, be breathed in other air; and the day may come when God may grant to me the application of this conviction to myself.

## CHAPTER VI

### CHARACTERISTICS

*(1840)*

> Be inspired with the belief that life is a great and noble calling; not a mean and grovelling thing that we are to shuffle through as we can, but an elevated and lofty destiny. — Gladstone.[1]

BOOK II. 1840.

It is the business of biography to depict a physiognomy and not to analyse a type. In our case there is all the more reason to think of this, because type hardly applies to a figure like Gladstone's, without any near or distant parallel, and composed of so many curious dualisms and unforeseen affinities. Truly was it said of Fénelon, that half of him would be a great man, and would stand out more clearly as a great man than does the whole, because it would be simpler. So of Mr. Gladstone. We are dazzled by the endless versatility of his mind and interests as man of action, scholar, and controversial athlete; as legislator, administrator, leader of the people; as the strongest of his time in the main branches of executive force, strongest in persuasive force; supreme in the exacting details of national finance; master of the parliamentary arts; yet always living in the noble visions of the moral and spiritual idealist. This opulence, vivacity, profusion, and the promise of it all in these days of early prime, made an awakening impression even on his foremost contemporaries. The impression might have been easier to reproduce, if he had been less infinitely mobile. 'I cannot explain my own foundation,' Fénelon said; 'it escapes me; it seems to change every hour.' How are we to seek an answer to the same question in the history of Mr. Gladstone?

[1] Hawarden Grammar School, Sept. 19, 1877.

II

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His physical vitality — his faculties of free energy, endurance, elasticity — was a superb endowment to begin with. We may often ask for ourselves and others: How many of a man's days does he really live? However men may judge the fruit it bore, Mr. Gladstone lived in vigorous activity every day through all his years. Time showed that he was born with a frame of steel. Though, unlike some men of heroic strength — Napoleon for example — he often knew fatigue and weariness, yet his organs never failed to answer the call of an intense and persistent Will. As we have already seen, in early manhood his eyes gave him much trouble, and he both learned by heart and composed a good deal of verse by way of sparing them. He was a great walker, and at this time he was a sportsman, as his diary has shown. 'My object in shooting, ill as I do it, is the invigorating and cheering exercise, which does so much for health (1842).' One day this year (Sept. 13, '42) while out shooting, the second barrel of a gun went off while he was reloading, shattering the forefinger of his left hand. The remains of the finger the surgeons removed. 'I have hardly ever in my life,' he says, 'had to endure serious bodily pain, and this was short.' In 1845, he notes, 'a hard day. What a mercy that my strength, in appearance not remarkable, so little fails me.' In the autumn of 1853 he was able to record, 'Eight or nine days of bed illness, the longest since I had the scarlet fever at nine or ten years old.' It was the same all through. His bodily strength was in fact to prove extraordinary, and was no secondary element in the long and strenuous course now opening before him.

Not second to vigour of physical organisation — perhaps, if we only knew all the secrets of mind and matter, even connected with this vigour — was strength and steadfastness of Will. Character, as has been often repeated, is completely fashioned will, and this superlative requirement, so indispensable for every man of action in whatever walk and on whatever scale, was eminently Mr. Gladstone's. From force of will, with all its roots in habit, example, conviction,

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purpose, sprang his leading and most effective qualities. He was never very ready to talk about himself, but when asked what he regarded as his master secret, he always said, '*Concentration.*' Slackness of mind, vacuity of mind, the wheels of the mind revolving without biting the rails of the subject, were insupportable. Such habits were of the family of faintheartedness, which he abhorred. Steady practice of instant, fixed, effectual attention, was the key alike to his rapidity of apprehension and to his powerful memory. In the orator's temperament exertion is often followed by a reaction that looks like indolence. This was never so with him. By instinct, by nature, by constitution, he was a man of action in all the highest senses of a phrase too narrowly applied and too narrowly construed. The currents of daimonic energy seemed never to stop, the vivid susceptibility to impressions never to grow dull. He was an idealist, yet always applying ideals to their purposes in act. Toil was his native element; and though he found himself possessed of many inborn gifts, he was never visited by the dream so fatal to many a well-laden argosy, that genius alone does all. There was nobody like him when it came to difficult business, for bending his whole strength to it, like a mighty archer stringing a stiff bow.

Sir James Graham said of him in these years that Gladstone could do in four hours what it took any other man sixteen to do, and he worked sixteen hours a day. When I came to know him long years after, he told me that he thought when in office in the times that our story is now approaching, fourteen hours were a common tale. Nor was it mere mechanic industry; it was hard labour, exact, strenuous, engrossing, rigorous. No Hohenzollern soldier held with sterner regularity to the duties of his post. Needless to add that he had a fierce regard for the sanctity of time, although in the calling of the politician it is harder than in any other to be quite sure when time is well spent, and when wasted. His supreme economy here, like many other virtues, carried its own defect, and coupled with his constitutional eagerness and his quick susceptibility, it led at all periods of his life to some hurry. The tumult of

business, he says one year in his diary, 'follows and whirls me day and night.' He speaks once in 1844 of 'a day restless as the sea.' There were many such. That does not mean, and has nothing to do with, 'proud precipitance of soul,' nor haste in forming pregnant resolves. Here he was deliberate enough, and in the ordinary conduct of life even minor things were objects of scrutiny and calculation, far beyond the habit of most men. For he was lowlander as well as highlander. But a vast percentage of his letters from boyhood onwards contain apologies for haste. More than once when his course was nearly run, he spoke of his life having been passed in 'unintermittent hurry,' just as Mill said, he had never been in a hurry in his life until he entered parliament, and then he had never been out of a hurry.

It was no contradiction that deep and constant in him, along with this vehement turn for action, was a craving for tranquil collection of himself that seemed almost monastic. To Mrs. Gladstone he wrote a couple of years after their marriage (Dec. 13, 1841): —

You interpret so indulgently what I mean about the necessity of quiescence at home during the parliamentary session, that I need not say much; and yet I think my doctrine must *seem* so strange that I wish again and again to state how entirely it is different from anything like disparagement, of George for example. It is always relief and always delight to see and to be with you; and you would, I am sure, be glad to know, how near Mary [Lady Lyttelton] comes as compared with others to you, as respects what I can hardly describe in few words, my mental rest, when she is present. But there is no *man* however near to me, with whom I am fit to be habitually, when hard worked. I have told you how reluctant I have always found myself to detail to my father on coming home, when I lived with him, what had been going on in the House of Commons. Setting a tired mind to work is like making a man run up and down stairs when his limbs are weary.

If he sometimes recalls a fiery hero of the *Iliad*, at other times he is the grave and studious benedictine, but whether

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in quietude or movement, always a man with a purpose and never the loiterer or lounger, never apathetic, never a sufferer from that worst malady of the human soul — from cheerlessness and cold.

We need not take him through a phrenological table of elements, powers, faculties, leanings, and propensities. Very early, as we shall soon see, Mr. Gladstone gave marked evidence of that sovereign quality of Courage which became one of the most signal of all his traits. He used to say that he had known three men in his time possessing in a supreme degree the virtue of parliamentary courage — Peel, Lord John Russell, and Disraeli. To some other contemporaries for whom courage might be claimed, he stoutly denied it. Nobody ever dreamed of denying it to him, whether parliamentary courage or any other, in either its active or its passive shape, either in daring or in fortitude. He had even the courage to be prudent, just as he knew when it was prudent to be bold. He applied in public things the Spenserian line, '*Be bold, be bold, and everywhere be bold*,' but neither did he forget the iron door with its admonition, '*Be not too bold*.' The great Condé, when complimented on his courage, always said that he took good care never to call upon it unless the occasion were absolutely necessary. No more did Mr. Gladstone go out of his way to summon courage for its own sake, but only when spurred by duty; then he knew no faltering. Capable of much circumspection, yet soon he became known for a man of lion heart.

Nature had bestowed on him many towering gifts. Whether Humour was among them, his friends were wont to dispute. That he had a gaiety and sympathetic alacrity of mind that was near of kin to humour, nobody who knew him would deny. Of playfulness his speeches give a thousand proofs; of drollery and fun he had a ready sense, though it was not always easy to be quite sure beforehand what sort of jest would hit or miss. For irony, save in its lighter forms as weapon in debate, he had no marked taste or turn. But he delighted in good comedy, and he reproached me severely for caring less than one ought to do for the *Merry Wives of Windsor*. Had he Imagination? In its high

literary and poetic form he rose to few conspicuous flights — such, for example, as Burke's descent of Hyder Ali upon the Carnatic — in vast and fantastic conceptions such as arose from time to time in the brain of Napoleon, he had no part or lot. But in force of moral and political imagination, in bold, excursive range, in the faculty of illuminating practical and objective calculations with lofty ideals of the strength of states, the happiness of peoples, the whole structure of good government, he has had no superior among the rulers of England. His very ardour of temperament gave him imagination; he felt as if everybody who listened to him in a great audience was equally fired with his own energy of sympathy, indignation, conviction, and was transported by the same emotion that thrilled through himself. All this, however, did not fully manifest itself at this time, nor for some years to come.

Strength of will found scope for exercise where some would not discover the need for it. In native capacity for righteous Anger he abounded. The flame soon kindled, and it was no fire of straw; but it did not master him. Mrs. Gladstone once said to me (1891), that whoever writes his life must remember that he had two sides — one impetuous, impatient, irrestrainable, the other all self-control, able to dismiss all but the great central aim, able to put aside what is weakening or disturbing; that he achieved this self-mastery, and had succeeded in the struggle ever since he was three or four and twenty, first by the natural power of his character, and second by incessant wrestling in prayer — prayer that had been abundantly answered.

Problems of compromise are of the essence of the parliamentary and cabinet system, and for some years at any rate he was more than a little restive when they confronted him. Though in the time to come he had abundant difference with colleagues, he had all the virtues needed for political co-operation, as Cobden, Bright, and Mill had them, nor did he ever mistake for courage or independence the unhappy preference for having a party or an opinion exclusively to one's self. 'What is wanted above all things,' he said, 'in the business of joint counsel, is the faculty of making many

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one, of throwing the mind into the common stock.'[1] This was a favourite phrase with him for that power of working with other people, without which a man would do well to stand aside from public affairs. He used to say that of all the men he had ever known, Sir George Grey had most of this capacity for throwing his mind into joint stock. The demands of joint stock he never took to mean the quenching of the duty in a man to have a mind of his own. He was always amused by the recollection of somebody at Oxford — 'a regius professor of divinity, I am sorry to say' — who was accustomed to define taste as 'a faculty of coinciding with the opinion of the majority.'

Hard as he strove for a broad basis in general theory and high abstract principle, yet always aiming at practical ends he kept in sight the opportune. Nobody knew better the truth, so disastrously neglected by politicians who otherwise would be the very salt of the earth, that not all questions are for all times. 'For my part,' Mr. Gladstone said, 'I have not been so happy, at any time of my life, as to be able sufficiently to adjust the proper conditions of handling any difficult question, until the question itself was at the door.'[2] He could not readily apply himself to topics outside of those with which he chanced at the moment to be engrossed: — 'Can you not wait? Is it necessary to consider now?' That was part of his concentration. Nor did he fly at a piece of business, deal with it, then let it fall from his grasp. It became part of him. If circumstances brought it again into his vicinity, they found him instantly ready, with a prompt continuity that is no small element of power in public business.

How little elastic and self-confident at heart he was in some of his moods in early manhood, we discern in the curious language of a letter to his brother-in-law Lyttelton in 1840: —

> It is my nature to lean not so much on the applause as upon the assent of others to a degree which perhaps I do not show, from that sense of weakness and utter inadequacy to my work which never ceases to attend me while I am engaged upon these subjects.

[1] Mr. Gladstone on Lord Houghton's *Life*; *Speaker*, Nov. 29, 1890.
[2] *Gleanings*, vii. p. 133.

. . . I wish you knew the state of total impotence to which I should be reduced if there were no echo to the accents of my own voice. I go through my labour, such as it is, not by a genuine elasticity of spirit, but by a plodding movement only just able to contend with inert force, and in the midst of a life which indeed has little claim to be called active, yet is broken this way and that into a thousand small details, certainly unfavourable to calm and continuity of thought.

Here we have a glimpse of a singular vein peculiarly rare in ardent genius at thirty, but disclosing its traces in Mr. Gladstone even in his ripest years.

Was this the instinct of the orator? For it was in the noble arts of oratory that nature had been most lavish, and in them he rose to be consummate. The sympathy and assent of which he speaks are a part of oratorical inspiration, and even if such sympathy be but superficial, the highest efforts of oratorical genius take it for granted. 'The work of the orator,' he once wrote, 'from its very inception is inextricably mixed up with practice. It is cast in the mould offered to him by the mind of his hearers. It is an influence principally received from his audience (so to speak) in vapour, which he pours back upon them in a flood. The sympathy and concurrence of his time, is, with his own mind, joint parent of the work. He cannot follow nor frame ideals: his choice is, to be what his age will have him, what it requires in order to be moved by him; or else not to be at all.'[1]

Among Mr. Gladstone's physical advantages for bearing the orator's sceptre were a voice of singular fulness, depth, and variety of tone; a falcon's eye with strange imperious flash; features mobile, expressive, and with lively play; a great actor's command of gesture, bold, sweeping, natural, unforced, without exaggeration or a trace of melodrama. His pose was easy, alert, erect. To these endowments of external mien was joined the gift and the glory of words. They were not sought, they came. Whether the task were reasoning or exposition or expostulation, the copious springs never failed. Nature had thus done much for him, but he

[1] *Homeric Studies*, vol. iii.

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superadded ungrudging labour. Later in life he proffered to a correspondent a set of suggestions on the art of speaking: —

1. Study plainness of language, always preferring the simpler word. 2. Shortness of sentences. 3. Distinctness of articulation. 4. Test and question your own arguments beforehand, not waiting for critic or opponent. 5. Seek a thorough digestion of, and familiarity with, your subject, and rely mainly on these to prompt the proper words. 6. Remember that if you are to sway an audience you must besides thinking out your matter, watch them all along. — (March 20, 1875.)

The first and second of these rules hardly fit his own style. Yet he had seriously studied from early days the devices of a speaker's training. I find copied into a little note-book many of the precepts and maxims of Quintilian on the making of an orator. So too from Cicero's *De Oratore*, including the words put into the mouth of Catulus, that nobody can attain the glory of eloquence without the height of zeal and toil and knowledge.[1] Zeal and toil and knowledge, working with an inborn faculty of powerful expression — here was the double clue. He never forgot the Ciceronian truth that the orator is not made by the tongue alone, as if it were a sword sharpened on a whetstone or hammered on an anvil; but by having a mind well filled with a free supply of high and various matter.[2] His eloquence was 'inextricably mixed up with practice.' An old whig listening to one of his budget speeches, said with a touch of bitterness, 'Ah, Oxford on the surface, but Liverpool below.' No bad combination. He once had a lesson from Sir Robert Peel. Mr. Gladstone, being about to reply in debate, turned to his chief and said: 'Shall I be short and concise?' 'No,' was the answer, 'be long and diffuse. It is all important in the House of Commons to state your case in many different ways, so as to produce an effect on men of many ways of thinking.'

In discussing Macaulay, Sir Francis Baring, an able and unbiassed judge, advised a junior (1860) about patterns for

[1] Book ii. § 89, 363.

[2] Non enim solum acuenda nobis neque procudenda lingua est, sed onerandum complendumque pectus maximarum rerum et plurimarum suavitate, copia, varietate. Cicero, *De Orat.*, iii. § 30.

the parliamentary aspirant: —'Gladstone is to my mind a much better model for speaking; I mean he is happier in joining great eloquence and selection of words and rhetoric, if you will, with a style not a bit above debate. It does not smell of the oil. Of course there has been plenty of labour, and that not of to-day but during a whole life.' Nothing could be truer. Certainly for more than the first forty years of his parliamentary existence, he cultivated a style not above debate, though it was debate of incomparable force and brilliance. When simpletons say, as if this were to dispose of every higher claim for him, that he worked all his wonders by his gifts as orator, do they ever think what power over such an assembly as the House of Commons signifies? Here—and it was not until he had been for thirty years and more in parliament that he betook himself largely to the efforts of the platform — here he was addressing men of the world, some of them the flower of English education and intellectual accomplishment; experts in all the high practical lines of life, bankers, merchants, lawyers, captains of industry in every walk; men trained in the wide experience and high responsibilities of public office; lynx-eyed rivals and opponents. Is this the scene, or were these the men, for the triumphs of the barren rhetorician and the sophist, whose words have no true relation to the facts? Where could general mental strength be better tested? As a matter of history most of those who have held the place of leading minister in the House of Commons have hardly been orators at all, any more than Washington and Jefferson were orators. Mr. Gladstone conquered the house, because he was saturated with a subject and its arguments; because he could state and enforce his case; because he plainly believed every word he said, and earnestly wished to press the same belief into the minds of his hearers; finally because he was from the first an eager and a powerful athlete. The man who listening to his adversary asks of his contention, 'Is this true?' is a lost debater; just as a soldier would be lost who on the day of battle should bethink him that the enemy's cause might after all perhaps be just. The debater does not ask, 'Is this true?' He asks, 'What is the answer to this? How can I most surely floor

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him?' Lord Coleridge inquired of Mr. Gladstone whether he ever felt nervous in public speaking: 'In opening a subject often,' Mr. Gladstone answered, 'in reply never.' Yet with this inborn readiness for combat, nobody was less addicted to aggression or provocation. It was with him a salutary maxim that, if you have unpalatable opinions to declare, you should not make them more unpalatable by the way of expressing them. In his earlier years he did not often speak with passion. 'This morning,' a famous divine once said, 'I preached a sermon all flames.' Mr. Gladstone sometimes made speeches of that cast, but not frequently, I think, until the seventies. Meanwhile he impressed the House by his nobility, his sincerity, his simplicity; for there is plenty of evidence besides Mr. Gladstone's case, that simplicity of character is no hindrance to subtlety of intellect.

Contemporaries in these opening years describe his parliamentary manners as much in his favour. His countenance, they say, is mild and pleasant, and has a high intellectual expression. His eyes are clear and quick. His eyebrows are dark and rather prominent. There is not a dandy in the House but envies his fine head of jet-black hair. Mr. Gladstone's gesture is varied, but not violent. When he rises, he generally puts both his hands behind his back, and having there suffered them to embrace each other for a short time, he unclasps them, and allows them to drop on either side. They are not permitted to remain long in that locality before you see them again closed together, and hanging down before him.[1] Other critics say that his air and voice are too abstract, and 'you catch the sound as though he were communing with himself. It is as though you saw a bright picture through a filmy veil. His countenance, without being strictly handsome, is highly intellectual. His pale complexion, slightly tinged with olive, and dark hair, cut rather close to his head, with an eye of remarkable depth, still more impress you with the abstracted character of his disposition. The expression of his face would be sombre were it not for the striking eye, which has a remarkable fascination. His triumphs as a debater are achieved not by the aid of the

[1] *The British Senate*, by James Grant, vol. ii. pp. 88–92.

passions, as with Sir James Graham, or with Mr. Sheil; not of prejudice and fallacy, as with Robert Peel; not with imagination and high seductive colouring, as with Mr. Macaulay: but — of pure reason. He prevails by that subdued earnestness which results from deep religious feelings, and is not fitted for the more usual and more stormy functions of a public speaker.'[1]

III

We are not to think of him as prophet, seer, poet, founder of a system, or great born man of letters like Gibbon, Macaulay, Carlyle. Of these characters he was none, though he had warmth and height of genius to comprehend the value of them all, and — what was more curious — his oratory and his acts touched them and their work in such a way that men were always tempted to apply to him standards that belonged to them. His calling was a different one, and he was wont to appraise it lower. His field lay 'in working the institutions of his country.' Whether he would have played a part as splendid in the position of a high ruling ecclesiastic, if the times had allowed such a personage, we cannot tell; perhaps he had not 'imperious immobility' enough. Nor whether he would have made a judge of the loftier order; perhaps his mind was too addicted to subtle distinctions, and not likely to give a solid adherence to broad principles of law. A superb advocate? An evangelist, as irresistible as Wesley or as Whitefield? What matters it? All agree that more magnificent power of mind was never placed at the service of the British Senate.

His letters to his father from 1832 onwards show all the interest of a keen young member in his calling, though they contain few anecdotes, or tales, or vivid social traits. 'Of political gossip,' he admits to his father (1843), 'you always find me barren enough.' What comes out in all his letters to his kinsfolk is his unbounded willingness to take trouble in order to spare others. Even in prolonged and intricate money transactions, of which we shall see something later —

[1] *Anatomy of Parliament*, November 1840. 'Contemporary Orators,' in *Fraser's Magazine*.

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transactions of all others the most apt to produce irritation — not an accent of impatience or dispute escapes him, though the guarded firmness of his language marks the steadfast self-control. We may say of Mr. Gladstone that nobody ever had less to repent of from that worst waste in human life that comes of unkindness. Kingsley noticed, with some wonder, how he never allowed the magnitude and multiplicity of his labours to excuse him from any of the minor charities and courtesies of life.

Active hatred of cruelty, injustice, and oppression is perhaps the main difference between a good man and a bad one; and here Mr. Gladstone was sublime. Yet though anger burned fiercely in him over wrong, nobody was more chary of passing moral censures. What he said of himself in 1842, when he was three and thirty, held good to the end: —

> Nothing grows upon me so much with lengthening life as the sense of the difficulties, or rather the impossibilities, with which we are beset whenever we attempt to take to ourselves the functions of the Eternal Judge (except in reference to ourselves where judgment is committed to us), and to form any accurate idea of relative merit and demerit, good and evil, in actions. The shades of the rainbow are not so nice, and the sands of the sea-shore are not such a multitude, as are all the subtle, shifting, blending forms of thought and of circumstances that go to determine the character of us and of our acts. But there is One that seeth plainly and judgeth righteously.

This was only one side of Mr. Gladstone's many silences. To talk of the silences of the most copious and incessant speaker and writer of his time may seem a paradox. Yet in this fluent orator, this untiring penman, this eager and most sociable talker at the dinner-table or on friendly walks, was a singular faculty of self-containment and reserve. Quick to notice, as he was, and acutely observant of much that might have been expected to escape him, he still kept as much locked up within as he so liberally gave out. Bulwer Lytton was at one time, as is well known, addicted to the study of mediæval magic, occult power, and the conjunctions of the heavenly bodies; and among other figures he one day

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amused himself by casting the horoscope of Mr. Gladstone (1860). To him the astrologer's son sent it. Like most of such things, the horoscope has one or two ingenious hits and a dozen nonsensical misses. But one curious sentence declares Mr. Gladstone to be '*at heart a solitary man.*' Here I have often thought that the stars knew what they were about.

Whether Mr. Gladstone ever became what is called a good judge of men it would be hard to say. Such characters are not common even among parliamentary leaders. They do not always care to take the trouble. The name is too commonly reserved for those who think dubiously or downright ill of their fellow-creatures. Those who are accustomed to make most of knowing men, do their best to convince us that men are hardly worth knowing. This was not Mr. Gladstone's way. Like Lord Aberdeen, he had a marked habit of believing people; it was part of his simplicity. His life was a curious union of ceaseless contention and inviolable charity — a true charity, having nothing in common with a lazy spirit of unconcern. He knew men well enough, at least, to have found out that none gains such ascendency over them as he who appeals to what is the nobler part in human nature. Nestors of the whigs used to wonder how so much imagination, invention, courage, knowledge, diligence — all the qualities that seem to make an orator and a statesman — could be neutralised by the want of a sound overruling judgment. They said that Gladstone's faculties were like an army without a general, or a jury without guidance from the bench.[1] Yet when the time came, this army without a general won the crowning victories of the epoch, and for twenty years the chief findings of this jury without a judge proved to be the verdicts of the nation.

It is not easy for those less extraordinarily constituted, to realise the vigour of soul that maintained an inner life in all its absorbing exaltation day after day, year after year, decade after decade, amid the ever-swelling rush of urgent secular affairs. Immersed in active responsibility for momentous

[1] Lord Lansdowne to Senior (1855), in Mrs. Simpson's *Many Memories*, p. 226.

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secular things, he never lost the breath of what was to him a diviner aether. Habitually he strove for the lofty uplands where political and moral ideas meet. Even in those days he struck all who came into contact with him by a goodness and elevation that matched the activity and power of his mind. His political career might seem doubtful, but there was no doubt about the man. One of the most interesting of his notes about his own growth is this: —

> There was a singular slowness in the development of my mind, so far as regarded its opening into the ordinary aptitudes of the man of the world. For years and years well into advanced middle life, I seem to have considered actions simply as they were in themselves, and did not take into account the way in which they would be taken and understood by others. I did not perceive that their natural or probable effect upon minds other than my own formed part of the considerations determining the propriety of each act in itself, and not unfrequently, at any rate in public life, supplied the decisive criterion to determine what ought and what ought not to be done. In truth the dominant tendencies of my mind were those of a recluse, and I might, in most respects with ease, have accommodated myself to the education of the cloister. All the mental apparatus requisite to constitute the 'public man' had to be purchased by a slow experience and inserted piecemeal into the composition of my character.

Lord Malmesbury describes himself in 1844 as curious to see Mr. Gladstone, 'for he is a man much spoken of as one who will come to the front.' He was greatly disappointed at his personal appearance, 'which is that of a Roman catholic ecclesiastic, but he is very agreeable.'[1] Few men can have been more perplexed, and few perhaps more perplexing, as the social drama of the capital was in time unfolded to his gaze. There he beheld the glitter of rank and station, and palaces, and men and women bearing famous names; worlds within worlds, high diplomatic figures, the partisan leaders, the constant stream of agitated rumours about weighty affairs in England and Europe; the keen play of ambition, passions, interests, under easy manners and fugitive

[1] Malmesbury, *Memoirs of an Ex-Minister*, i. p. 155.

pleasantry; gross and sordid aims, as King Hudson was soon to find out, masked by exterior refinement; so much kindness with a free spice of criticism and touches of ill-nature; so much of the governing force of England still gathered into a few great houses, exclusive and full of pride, and yet, after the astounding discovery that in spite of the deluge of the Reform bill they were still alive as the directing class, always so open to political genius if likely to climb, and help them to climb, into political power. These were the last high days of the undisputed sway of territorial aristocracy in England. The artificial scene was gay and captivating; but much in it was well fitted to make serious people wonder. Queen Victoria was assuredly not of the harsh fibre of the misanthropist in Molière's fine comedy; yet she once said a strange and deep thing to an archbishop. 'As I get older,' she said, 'I cannot understand the world. I cannot comprehend its littlenesses. When I look at the frivolities and littlenesses, *it seems to me as if they were all a little mad.*'[1]

This was the stage on which Mr. Gladstone, with 'the dominant tendencies of a recluse' and a mind that might easily have been 'accommodated to the cloister,' came to play his part, — in which he was 'by a slow experience' to insert piecemeal the mental apparatus proper to the character of the public man. Yet it was not among the booths and merchandise and hubbub of Vanity Fair, it was among strata in the community but little recognised as yet, that he was to find the field and the sources of his highest power. His view of the secular world was never fastidious or unmanly. Looking back upon his long experience of it he wrote (1894): —

That political life considered as a profession has great dangers for the inner and true life of the human being, is too obvious. It has, however, some redeeming qualities. In the first place, I have never known, and can hardly conceive, a finer school of temper than the House of Commons. A lapse in this respect is on the instant an offence, a jar, a wound, to every member of the assembly; and it brings its own punishment on the instant, like the sins of the Jews under the old dispensation. Again, I think

[1] *Life of Archbishop Benson*, ii. p. 11.

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the imperious nature of the subjects, their weight and force, demanding the entire strength of a man and all his faculties, leave him no residue, at least for the time, to apply to self-regard; no more than there is for a swimmer swimming for his life. He must, too, in retrospect feel himself to be so very small in comparison with the themes and the interests of which he has to treat. It is a further advantage if his occupation be not mere debate, but debate ending in work. For in this way, whether the work be legislative or administrative, it is continually tested by results, and he is enabled to strip away his extravagant anticipations, his fallacious conceptions, to perceive his mistakes, and to reduce his estimates to the reality. No politician has any excuse for being vain.

Like the stoic emperor, Mr. Gladstone had in his heart the feeling that the man is a runaway who deserts the exercise of civil reason.

IV

All his activities were in his own mind one. This, we can hardly repeat too often, is the fundamental fact of Mr. Gladstone's history. Political life was only part of his religious life. It was religion that prompted his literary life. It was religious motive that, through a thousand avenues and channels stirred him and guided him in his whole conception of active social duty, including one pitiful field of which I may say something later. The liberalism of the continent at this epoch was in its essence either hostile to Christianity or else it was indifferent; and when men like Lamennais tried to play at the same time the double part of tribune of the people and catholic theocrat, they failed. The old world of pope and priest and socialist and red cap of liberty fought on as before. In England, too, the most that can be said of the leading breed of the political reformers of that half century, with one or two most notable exceptions, is that they were theists, and not all of them were even so much as theists.[1] If liberalism had continued to run in the grooves cut by Bentham, James Mill, Grote, and the rest, Mr. Glad-

[1] The noble anti-slavery movement must be excepted, for it was very directly connected with evangelicalism.

stone would never have grown to be a liberal. He was not only a fervid practising Christian; he was a Christian steeped in the fourth century, steeped in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Every man of us has all the centuries in him, though their operations be latent, dim, and very various; in his case the roots were as unmistakeable as the leafage, the blossom, and the fruits. A little later than the date with which we are now dealing (May 9, 1854) — and here the date matters little, for the case was always the same — he noted what in hours of strain and crisis the Bible was to him: —

On most occasions of very sharp pressure or trial, some word of scripture has come home to me as if borne on angels' wings. Many could I recollect. The Psalms are the great storehouse. Perhaps I should put some down now, for the continuance of memory is not to be trusted. 1. In the winter of 1837, Psalm 128. This came in a most singular manner, but it would be a long story to tell. 2. In the Oxford contest of 1847 (which was very harrowing) the verse — 'O Lord God, Thou strength of my health, Thou hast covered my head in the day of battle.' 3. In the Gorham contest, after the judgment: 'And though all this be come upon us, yet do we not forget Thee; nor behave ourselves frowardly in Thy covenant. Our heart is not turned back; neither our steps gone out of Thy way. No not when Thou hast smitten us into the place of dragons: and covered us with the shadow of death.' 4. On Monday, April 17, 1853 [his first budget speech], it was: 'O turn Thee then unto me, and have mercy upon me: give Thy strength unto Thy servant, and help the son of Thine handmaid.' Last Sunday [Crimean war budget] it was not from the Psalms for the day: 'Thou shalt prepare a table before me against them that trouble me; Thou hast anointed my head with oil and my cup shall be full.'

In that stage at least he had shaken off none of the grip of tradition, in which his book and college training had placed him. His mind still had greater faith in things because Aristotle or Augustine said them, than because they are true.[1] If the end of education be to teach independence of mind, the Socratic temper, the love of pushing into unex-

[1] Paruta, i. p. 64.

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plored areas — intellectual curiosity in a word — Oxford had done none of all this for him. In every field of thought and life he started from the principle of authority; it fitted in with his reverential instincts, his temperament, above all, his education.

The lifelong enthusiasm for Dante should on no account in this place be left out. In Mr. Gladstone it was something very different from casual dilettantism or the accident of a scholar's taste. He was always alive to the grandeur of Goethe's words, *Im Ganzen, Guten, Wahren, resolut zu leben*, 'In wholeness, goodness, truth, strenuously to live.' But it was in Dante — active politician and thinker as well as poet — that he found this unity of thought and coherence of life, not only illuminated by a sublime imagination, but directly associated with theology, philosophy, politics, history, sentiment, duty. Here are all the elements and interests that lie about the roots of the life of a man, and of the general civilisation of the world. This ever memorable picture of the mind and heart of Europe in the great centuries of the catholic age, — making heaven the home of the human soul, presenting the natural purposes of mankind in their universality of good and evil, exalted and mean, piteous and hateful, tragedy and farce, all commingled as a living whole, — was exactly fitted to the quality of a genius so rich and powerful as Mr. Gladstone's in the range of its spiritual intuitions and in its masculine grasp of all the complex truths of mortal nature. So true and real a book is it, he once said, — such a record of practical humanity and of the discipline of the soul amidst its wonderful poetical intensity and imaginative power. In him this meant no spurious revivalism, no flimsy and fantastic affectation. It was the real and energetic discovery in the vivid conception and commanding structure of Dante, of a light, a refuge, and an inspiration in the labours of the actual world. 'You have been good enough,' he once wrote to an Italian correspondent (1883), 'to call that supreme poet "a solemn master" for me. These are not empty words. The reading of Dante is not merely a pleasure, a *tour de force*, or a lesson; it is a vigorous discipline for the heart, the intellect, the whole man. In the

school of Dante I have learned a great part of that mental provision (however insignificant it may be) which has served me to make the journey of human life up to the term of nearly seventy-three years.' He once asked of an accomplished woman possessing a scholar's breadth of reading, what poetry she most lived with. She named Dante for one. 'But what of Dante?' 'The Paradiso,' she replied. 'Ah, that is right,' he exclaimed, 'that's my test.' In the Paradiso it was, that he saw in beams of crystal radiance the ideal of the unity of the religious mind, the love and admiration for the high unseen things of which the Christian church was to him the sovereign embodiment. The mediæval spirit, it is true, wears something of a ghostly air in the light of our new day. This attempt, which has been made many a time before, 'to unify two ages,' did not carry men far in the second half of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless it were an idle dream to think that the dead hand of Dante's century, and all that it represented, is no longer to be taken into account by those who would be governors of men. Meanwhile, let us observe once more that the statesman who had drunk most deeply from the mediæval fountains was yet one of the supreme leaders of his own generation in a notable stage of the long transition from mediæval to modern.

'At Oxford,' he records, 'I read Rousseau's *Social Contract* which had no influence upon me, and the writings of Burke which had a great deal.' Yet the day came when he too was drawn by the movement of things into the flaming circle of thought, feeling, phrase, that in romance and politics and all the ways of life Europe for a century associated with the name of Rousseau. There was what men call Rousseau in a statesman who could talk of men's common 'flesh and blood' in connection with a franchise bill. Indeed one of the strangest things in Mr. Gladstone's growth and career is this unconscious raising of a partially Rousseauite structure on the foundations laid by Burke, to whom Rousseau was of all writers on the nature of man and the ordering of states the most odious and contemptible. We call it strange, though such amalgams of contrary ways of thinking and feeling are more common than careless observers may suppose. Mr. Gladstone

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was never an 'equalitarian,' but the passion for simplicity he had — simplicity in life, manners, feeling, conduct, the relations of men to men; dislike of luxury and profusion and all the fabric of artificial and factitious needs. It may well be that he went no further for all this than the Sermon on the Mount, where so many secret elements of social volcano slumber. However we may choose to trace the sources and relations of Mr. Gladstone's general ideas upon the political problems of his time, what he said of himself in the evening of his day was at least true of its dawn and noon. 'I am for old customs and traditions,' he wrote, 'against needless change. I am for the individual as against the state. I am for the family and the stable family as against the state.' He must have been in eager sympathy with Wordsworth's line taken from old Spenser in these very days, 'Perilous is sweeping change, all chance unsound.'[1] Finally and above all, he stood firm in 'the old Christian faith.' Life was to him in all its aspects an application of Christian teaching and example. If we like to put it so, he was steadfast for making politics more human, and no branch of civilised life needs humanising more.

Here we touch the question of questions. At nearly every page of Mr. Gladstone's active career the vital problem stares us in the face, of the correspondence between the rule of private morals and of public. Is the rule one and the same for individual and for state? From these early years onwards, Mr. Gladstone's whole language and the moods that it reproduces, — his vivid denunciations, his sanguine expectations, his rolling epithets, his aspects and appeals and points of view, — all take for granted that right and wrong depend on the same set of maxims in public life and private. The puzzle will often greet us, and here it is enough to glance at it. In every statesman's case it arises; in Mr. Gladstone's it is cardinal and fundamental.

V

To say that he had drawn prizes in what is called the lottery of life would not be untrue; but just as true is it

[1] 'Blest statesman he, whose mind's unselfish will' (1838). — Knight's *Wordsworth*, viii. p. 101.

that one of those very prizes was the determined conviction that life is no lottery at all, but a serious business worth taking infinite pains upon. To one of his sons at Oxford he wrote a little paper of suggestions that are the actual description of his own lifelong habit and unbroken practice.

*Strathconan, Oct.* 7, 1872.—1. To keep a short journal of principal employments in each day: most valuable as an account-book of the all-precious gift of Time.

2. To keep also an account-book of receipt and expenditure; and the least troublesome way of keeping it is to keep it with care. This done in early life, and carefully done, creates the habit of performing the great duty of keeping our expenditure (and therefore our desires) within our means.

3. Read attentively (and it is pleasant reading) Taylor's essay on Money,[1] which if I have not done it already, I will give you. It is most healthy and most useful reading.

4. Establish a minimum number of hours in the day for study, say seven at present, and do not without reasonable cause let it be less; noting down against yourself the days of exception. There should also be a minimum number for the vacations, which at Oxford are extremely long.

5. There arises an important question about Sundays. Though we should to the best of our power avoid secular work on Sundays, it does not follow that the mind should remain idle. There is an immense field of knowledge connected with religion, and much of it is of a kind that will be of use in the schools and in relation to your general studies. In these days of shallow scepticism, so widely spread, it is more than ever to be desired that we should be able to give a reason for the hope that is in us.

6. As to duties directly religious, such as daily prayer in the morning and evening, and daily reading of some portion of the Holy Scripture, or as to the holy ordinances of the gospel, there is little need, I am confident, to advise you; one thing, however, I would say, that it is not difficult, and it is most beneficial, to cultivate the habit of inwardly turning the thoughts to God, though but for a moment in the course or during the intervals of

[1] The first chapter in Sir Henry Taylor's *Notes from Life* (1847).

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our business; which continually presents occasions requiring His aid and guidance.

7. Turning again to ordinary duty, I know no precept more wide or more valuable than this: cultivate self-help; do not seek nor like to be dependent upon others for what you can yourself supply; and keep down as much as you can the standard of your wants, for in this lies a great secret of manliness, *true* wealth, and happiness; as, on the other hand, the multiplication of our wants makes us effeminate and slavish, as well as selfish.

8. In regard to money as well as to time, there is a great advantage in its methodical use. Especially is it wise to dedicate a certain portion of our means to purposes of charity and religion, and this is more easily begun in youth than in after life. The greatest advantage of making a little fund of this kind is that when we are asked to give, the competition is not between *self* on the one hand and charity on the other, but between the different purposes of religion and charity with one another, among which we ought to make the most careful choice. It is desirable that the fund thus devoted should not be less than one-tenth of our means; and it tends to bring a blessing on the rest.

9. Besides giving this, we should save something, so as to be before the world, *i.e.* to have some preparation to meet the accidents and unforeseen calls of life as well as its general future.

Fathers are generally wont to put their better mind into counsels to their sons. In this instance the counsellor was the living pattern of his own maxims. His account-books show in full detail that he never at any time in his life devoted less than a tenth of his annual incomings to charitable and religious objects. The peculiarity of all this half-mechanic ordering of a wise and virtuous individual life, was that it went with a genius and power that 'moulded a mighty State's decrees,' and sought the widest 'process of the suns.'

VI

Once more, his whole temper and spirit turned to practice. His thrift of time, his just and regulated thrift in money, his hatred of waste, were only matched by his eager and

minute attention in affairs of public business. He knew how to be content with small savings of hours and of material resources. He was not downcast if progress were slow. In watching public opinion, in feeling the pulse of a cabinet, in softening the heart of a colleague, even when skies were gloomiest, he was almost provokingly anxious to detect signs of encouragement that to others were imperceptible. He was of the mind of the Roman emperor, 'Hope not for the republic of Plato; but be content with ever so small an advance, and look on even that as a gain worth having.'[1] A commonplace, but not one of the commonplaces that are always laid to heart.

If faith was one clue, then next to faith was growth. The fundamentals of Christian dogma, so far as I know and am entitled to speak, are the only region in which Mr. Gladstone's opinions have no history. Everywhere else we look upon incessant movement; in views about church and state, tests, national schools; in questions of economic and fiscal policy; in relations with party; in the questions of popular government — in every one of these wide spheres of public interest he passes from crisis to crisis. The dealings of church and state made the first of these marked stages in the history of his opinions and his life, but it was only the beginning.

I was born with smaller natural endowments than you, he wrote to his old friend Sir Francis Doyle (1880), and I had also a narrower early training. But my life has certainly been remarkable for the mass of continuous and searching experience it has brought me ever since I began to pass out of boyhood. I have been feeling my way; owing little to living teachers, but enormously to four dead ones[2] (over and above the four gospels). It has been experience which has altered my politics. My toryism was accepted by me on authority and in good faith; I did my best to fight for it. But if you choose to examine my parliamentary life you will find that on every subject as I came to deal with it practically, I had to deal with it as a liberal elected in '32. I began with slavery in 1833, and was commended by the liberal

[1] Marcus Aurelius, ix. p. 29.

[2] Aristotle, Augustine, Dante, Butler. 'My four "doctors,"' he tells Manning, 'are doctors to the speculative man; would they were such to the practical too!'

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minister, Mr. Stanley. I took to colonial subjects principally, and in 1837 was commended for treating them liberally by Lord Russell. Then Sir R. Peel carried me into trade, and before I had been six months in office, I wanted to resign because I thought his corn law reform insufficient. In ecclesiastical policy I had been a speculator; but if you choose to refer to a speech of Sheil's in 1844 on the Dissenters' Chapels bill,[1] you will find him describing me as predestined to be a champion of religious equality. All this seems to show that I have changed under the teaching of experience.

And much later he wrote of himself: —

The stock in trade of ideas with which I set out on the career of parliamentary life was a small one. I do not think the general tendencies of my mind were even in the time of my youth illiberal. It was a great accident that threw me into the anti-liberal attitude, but having taken it up I held to it with energy. It was the accident of the Reform bill of 1831. For teachers or idols or both in politics I had had Mr. Burke and Mr. Canning. I followed them in their dread of reform, and probably caricatured them as a raw and unskilled student caricatures his master. This one idea on which they were anti-liberal became the master-key of the situation, and absorbed into itself for the time the whole of politics. This, however, was not my only disadvantage. I had been educated in an extremely narrow churchmanship, that of the evangelical party. This narrow churchmanship too readily embraced the idea that the extension of representative principles, which was then the essential work of liberalism, was associated with irreligion; an idea quite foreign to my older sentiment on behalf of Roman catholic emancipation. (*Autobiographic note, July* 22, 1894.)

VII

Notwithstanding his humility, his willingness within a certain range to learn, his profound reverence for what he took for truth, he was no more ready than many far inferior men to discern a certain important rule of intellectual life that was expressed in a quaint figure by one of our old

[1] See below, p. 323.

English sages. 'He is a wonderful man,' said the sage, 'that can thread a needle when he is at cudgels in a crowd; and yet this is as easy as to find Truth in the hurry of disputation.'[1] The strenuous member of parliament, the fervid minister fighting the clauses of his bill, the disputant in cabinet, when he passed from man of action to the topics of balanced thought, nice scrutiny, long meditation, did not always succeed in getting his thread into the needle's eye.

As to the problems of the metaphysician, Mr. Gladstone showed little curiosity. Nor for abstract discussion in its highest shape — for investigation of ultimate propositions — had he any of that power of subtle and ingenious reasoning which was often so extraordinary when he came to deal with the concrete, the historic, and the demonstrable. A still more singular limitation on the extent of his intellectual curiosity was hardly noticed at this early epoch. The scientific movement, which along with the growth of democracy and the growth of industrialism formed the three propelling forces of a new age, — was not yet developed in all its range. The astonishing discoveries in the realm of natural science, and the philosophic speculations that were built upon them, though quite close at hand, were still to come. Darwin's *Origin of Species*, for example, was not given to the world until 1859. Mr. Gladstone watched these things vaguely and with misgiving; instinct must have told him that the advance of natural explanation, whether legitimately or not, would be in some degree at the expense of the supernatural. But from any full or serious examination of the details of the scientific movement he stood aside, safe and steadfast within the citadel of Tradition.

He was once asked to subscribe to a memorial of Tyndale, the translator of the Bible,[2] and he put his refusal upon grounds that show one source at least of his scruple about words. He replies that he has been driven to a determination to renounce all subscriptions for the commemoration of ancient worthies, as he finds that he cannot signify gratitude

[1] Glanville's *Vanity of Dogmatising*.

[2] See Shaftesbury's *Life*, iii. p. 495. He refused to be on a committee for a memorial to Thirlwall. (1875.)

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for services rendered, without being understood to sanction all that they have said or done, and thus becoming involved in controversy or imputation about them. 'I am often amazed,' he goes on, 'at the construction put upon my acts and words; but experience has shown me that they are commonly put under the microscope, and then found to contain all manner of horrors, like the animalcules in Thames water.' This microscope was far too valuable an instrument in the contentions of party, ever to be put aside; and the animalcules, duly magnified to the frightful size required, were turned into first-rate electioneering agents. Even without party microscopes, those who feel most warmly for Mr. Gladstone's manifold services to his country, may often wish that he had inscribed in letters of gold over the door of the Temple of Peace, a certain sentence from the wise oracles of his favourite Butler. 'For the conclusion of this,' said the bishop, 'let me just take notice of the danger of over-great refinements; of going beside or beyond the plain, obvious first appearances of things, upon the subject of morals and religion.'[1] Nor would he have said less of politics. It is idle to ignore in Mr. Gladstone's style an over-refining in words, an excess of qualifying propositions, a disproportionate impressiveness in verbal shadings without real difference. Nothing irritated opponents more. They insisted on taking literary sin for moral obliquity, and because men could not understand, they assumed that he wished to mislead. Yet if we remember how carelessness in words, how the slovenly combination under the same name of things entirely different, how the taking for granted as matter of positive proof what is at the most only possible or barely probable — when we think of all the mischief and folly that has been wrought in the world by loose habits of mind that are almost as much the master vice of the head as selfishness is the master vice of the heart, men may forgive Mr. Gladstone for what passed as sophistry and subtlety, but was in truth scruple of conscience in that region where lack of scruple half spoils the world.

This peculiar trait was connected with another that sometimes amused friends, but always exasperated foes. Among

[1] First Sermon, *Upon Compassion.*

the papers is a letter from an illustrious man to Mr. Gladstone — wickedly no better dated by the writer than 'Saturday,' and no better docketed by the receiver than 'T. B. Macaulay, March 1,' — showing that Mr. Gladstone was just as energetic, say in some year between 1835 and 1850, in defending the entire consistency between a certain speech of the dubious date and a speech in 1833, as he ever afterwards showed himself in the same too familiar process. In later times he described himself as a sort of purist in what touches the consistency of statesmen. 'Change of opinion,' he said, 'in those to whose judgment the public looks more or less to assist its own, is an evil to the country, although a much smaller evil than their persistence in a course which they know to be wrong. It is not always to be blamed. But it is always to be watched with vigilance; always to be challenged and put upon its trial.'[1] To this challenge in his own case — and no man of his day was half so often put upon his trial for inconsistency — he was always most easily provoked to make a vehement reply. In that process Mr. Gladstone's natural habit of resort to qualifying words, and his skill in showing that a new attitude could be reconciled by strict reasoning with the logical contents of old dicta, gave him wonderful advantage. His adversary, as he strode confidently along the smooth grass, suddenly found himself treading on a serpent; he had overlooked a condition, a proviso, a word of hypothesis or contingency, that sprang from its ambush and brought his triumph to naught on the spot. If Mr. Gladstone had only taken as much trouble that his hearers should understand exactly what it was that he meant, as he took trouble afterwards to show that his meaning had been grossly misunderstood, all might have been well. As it was, he seemed to be completely satisfied if he could only show that two propositions, thought by plain men to be directly contradictory, were all the time capable on close construction of being presented in perfect harmony. As if I had a right to look only to what my words literally mean or may in good logic be made to mean, and had no concern at all with what the people meant who used the same words,

[1] *Gleanings*, vii. p. 100, 1868.

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or with what I might have known that my hearers were all the time supposing me to mean. Hope-Scott once wrote to him (November 24, 1841): 'We live in a time in which accurate distinctions, especially in theology, are absolutely unconsidered. The "common sense" or general tenor of questions is what alone the majority of men are guided by. And I verily believe that semi-arian confessions or any others turning upon nicety of thought and expression, would be for the most part considered as fitter subjects for scholastic dreamers than for earnest Christians.' In politics at any rate, Bishop Butler was wiser.

The explanation of what was assailed as inconsistency is perhaps a double one. In the first place he started on his journey with an intellectual chart of ideas and principles not adequate or well fitted for the voyage traced for him by the spirit of his age. If he held to the inadequate ideas with which Oxford and Canning and his father and even Peel had furnished him, he would have been left helpless and useless in the days stretching before him. The second point is that the orator of Mr. Gladstone's commanding school exists by virtue of large and intense expression; then if circumstances make him as vehement for one opinion to-day as he was vehement for what the world regards as a conflicting opinion yesterday, his intellectual self-respect naturally prompts him to insist that the opinions do not really clash, but are in fact identical. You may call this a weakness if you choose, and it certainly involved Mr. Gladstone in much unfruitful and not very edifying exertion; but it is at any rate better than the front of brass that takes any change of opinion for matter-of-course expedient, as to which the least said will be soonest mended. And it is better still than the disastrous self-consciousness that makes a man persist in a foolish thing to-day, because he chanced to say or do a foolish thing yesterday.

VIII

In this period of his life, with the battle of the world still to come, Mr. Gladstone to whose grave temperament everything, little or great, was matter of deliberate reflection, of

duty and scruple, took early note of minor morals as well as major. Characteristically he found some fault with a sermon of Dr. Wordsworth's upon Saint Barnabas, for



hardly pushing the argument for the connection of good manners with Christianity to the full extent of which it is fairly capable. The whole system of legitimate courtesy, politeness, and refinement is surely nothing less than one of the genuine though minor and often unacknowledged results of the gospel scheme. All the great moral qualities or graces, which in their large sphere determine the formation and habits of the Christian soul as before God, do also on a smaller scale apply to the very same principles in the common intercourse of life, and pervade its innumerable and separately inappreciable particulars; and the result of this application is that good breeding which distinguishes Christian civilisation. (March 31, 1844.)

It is not for us to discuss whether the breeding of Plato or Cicero or the Arabs of Cordova was better or worse than the breeding of the eastern bishops at Nicæa or Ephesus. Good manners, we may be sure, hardly have a single master-key, unless it be simplicity, or freedom from the curse of affectation. What is certain is that nobody of his time was a finer example of high good manners and genuine courtesy than Mr. Gladstone himself. He has left a little sheaf of random jottings which, without being subtle or recondite, show how he looked on this side of human things. Here is an example or two: —

There are a class of passages in Mr. Wilberforce's *Journals, e.g.*, some of those recording his successful speeches, which might in many men be set down to vanity, but in him are more fairly I should think ascribable to a singlemindedness which did not inflate. Surely with *most* men it is the safest rule, to make scanty records of success achieved, and yet more rarely to notice praise, which should pass us like the breeze, enjoyed but not arrested. There must indeed be some sign, a stone as it were set up, to remind us that such and such were occasions for thankfulness; but should not the memorials be restricted wholly and expressly for this purpose? For the fumes of praise are rapidly and fear-

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fully intoxicating; it comes like a spark to the tow if once we give it, as it were, admission within us. (1838.)

There are those to whom vanity brings more of pain than of pleasure; there are also those whom it oftener keeps in the background, than thrusts forward. The same man who to-day volunteers for that which he is not called upon to do, may to-morrow flinch from his obvious duty from one and the same cause, — vanity, or regard to the appearance he is to make, for its own sake, and perhaps that vanity which shrinks is a more subtle and far-sighted, a more ethereal, a more profound vanity than that which presumes. (1842.)

A question of immense importance meets us in ethical inquiries, as follows: is there a sense in which it is needful, right, and praiseworthy, that man should be much habituated to look back upon himself and keep his eye upon himself; a self-regard, and even a self-respect, which are compatible with the self-renunciation and self-distrust which belong to Christianity? In the observance of a single distinction we shall find, perhaps, a secure and sufficient answer. We are to respect our responsibilities, not ourselves. We are to respect the duties of which we are capable, but not our capabilities simply considered. There is to be no complacent self-contemplation, beruminating upon self. When self is viewed, it must always be in the most intimate connection with its purposes. How well were it if persons would be more careful, or rather, more conscientious, in paying compliments. How often do we delude another, in subject matter small or great, into the belief that he has done well what we know he has done ill, either by silence, or by so giving him praise on a particular point as to *imply* approbation of the whole. Now it is undoubtedly difficult to observe politeness in all cases compatibly with truth; and politeness though a minor duty is a duty still. (1838.)

If truth permits you to praise, but binds you to praise with a qualification, observe how much more acceptably you will speak, if you put the qualification first, than if you postpone it. For example: 'this is a good likeness; but it is a hard painting,' is surely much less pleasing, than 'this is a hard painting; but it is a good likeness.' The qualification is generally taken to be more genuinely the sentiment of the speaker's mind, than the main

proposition; and it carries ostensible honesty and manliness to propose first what is the less acceptable. (1835–6.)

IX

To go back to Fénelon's question about his own foundation. 'The great work of religion,' as Mr. Gladstone conceived it, was set out in some sentences of a letter written by him to Mrs. Gladstone in 1844, five years after they were married. In these sentences we see that under all the agitated surface of a life of turmoil and contention, there flowed a deep composing stream of faith, obedience, and resignation, that gave him, in face of a thousand buffets, the free mastery of all his resources of heart and brain: —

*To Mrs. Gladstone.*

13 *C. H. Terrace, Sunday evening, Jan.* 21, 1844. — Although I have carelessly left at the board of trade with your other letters that on which I wished to have said something, yet I am going to end this day of peace by a few words to show that what you said did not lightly pass away from my mind. There is a beautiful little sentence in the works of Charles Lamb concerning one who had been afflicted: 'he gave his heart to the Purifier, and his will to the Sovereign Will of the Universe.'[1] But there is a speech in the third canto of the *Paradiso* of Dante, spoken by a certain Piccarda, which is a rare gem. I will only quote this one line:

*In la sua volontade è nostra pace.*[2]

The words are few and simple, and yet they appear to me to have an inexpressible majesty of truth about them, to be almost as if they were spoken from the very mouth of God. It so happened that (unless my memory much deceives me) I first read that speech on a morning early in the year 1836, which was one of trial. I was profoundly impressed and powerfully sustained, almost absorbed, by these words. They cannot be too deeply graven upon the heart. In short, what we all want is that they should not come

[1] *Rosamund Gray*, chap. xi.

[2] Mr. Gladstone's rendering of the speech of Piccarda (*Paradiso*, iii. 70) is in the volume of collected translations (p. 165), under the date of 1835:

'In His Will is our peace. To this all things
By Him created, or by Nature made,
As to a central Sea, self-motion brings.'

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to us as an admonition from without, but as an instinct from within. They should not be adopted by effort or upon a process of proof, but they should be simply the translation into speech of the habitual tone to which all tempers, affections, emotions, are set. In the Christian mood, which ought never to be intermitted, the sense of this conviction should recur spontaneously; it should be the foundation of all mental thoughts and acts, and the measure to which the whole experience of life, inward and outward, is referred. The final state which we are to contemplate with hope, and to seek by discipline, is that in which our will shall be *one* with the will of God; not merely shall submit to it, not merely shall follow after it, but shall live and move with it, even as the pulse of the blood in the extremities acts with the central movement of the heart. And this is to be obtained through a double process; the first, that of checking, repressing, quelling the inclination of the will to act with reference to self as a centre; this is to mortify it. The second, to cherish, exercise, and expand its new and heavenly power of acting according to the will of God, first, perhaps, by painful effort in great feebleness and with many inconsistencies, but with continually augmenting regularity and force, until obedience become a necessity of second nature. . . .

Resignation is too often conceived to be merely a submission not unattended with complaint to what we have no power to avoid. But it is less than the whole of a work of a Christian. Your full triumph as far as that particular occasion of duty is concerned will be to find that you not merely repress inward tendencies to murmur — but that you would not if you could alter what in any matter God has plainly willed. . . . Here is the great work of religion; here is the path through which sanctity is attained, the highest sanctity; and yet it is a path evidently to be traced in the course of our daily duties. . . .

When we are thwarted in the exercise of some innocent, laudable, and almost sacred affection, as in the case, though its scale be small, out of which all of this has grown, Satan has us at an advantage, because when the obstacle occurs, we have a sentiment that the feeling baffled is a right one, and in indulging a rebellious temper we flatter ourselves that we are merely as it were indulgent

on behalf, not of ourselves, but of a duty which we have been interrupted in performing. But our duties can take care of themselves when God calls us away from any of them. . . . To be able to relinquish a duty upon command shows a higher grace than to be able to give up a mere pleasure for a duty. . . .

The resignation thus described with all this power and deep feeling is, of course, in one form of thoughts and words, of symbol and synthesis, or another, the foundation of all the great systems of life. A summary of Mr. Gladstone's interpretation of it is perhaps found in a few words used by him of Blanco White, a heterodox writer whose strange spiritual fortunes painfully interested and perplexed him. 'He cherished,' says Mr. Gladstone, 'with whatever associations, the love of God, and maintained resignation to His will, even when it appears almost impossible to see how he could have had a dogmatic belief in the existence of a divine will at all. There was, in short [in Blanco White], a disposition *to resist the tyranny of self; to recognise the rule of duty; to maintain the supremacy of the higher over the lower parts of our nature.*'[1] This very disposition might with truth no less assured have been assigned to the writer himself. These three bright crystal laws of life were to him like pointer stars guiding a traveller's eye to the celestial pole by which he steers.

When all has been said of a man's gifts, the critical question still stands over, how he regards his responsibility for using them. Once in a conversation with Mr. Gladstone, some fifty years from the epoch of this present chapter, we fell upon the topic of ambition. 'Well,' he said, 'I do not think that I can tax myself in my own life with ever having been much moved by ambition.' The remark so astonished me that, as he afterwards playfully reported to a friend, I almost jumped up from my chair. We soon shall reach a stage in his career when both remark and surprise may explain themselves. We shall see that if ambition means love of power or fame for the sake of glitter, decoration, external renown, or even dominion and authority on

[1] *Gleanings*, ii. p. 20, 1845.

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their own account — and all these are common passions enough in strong natures as well as weak — then his view of himself was just. I think he had none of it. Ambition in a better sense, the motion of a resolute and potent genius to use strength for the purposes of strength, to clear the path, dash obstacles aside, force good causes forward — such a quality as that is the very law of the being of a personality so vigorous, intrepid, confident, and capable as his.

# CHAPTER VII

## CLOSE OF APPRENTICESHIP

(*1839–1841*)

> What are great gifts but the correlative of great work? We are not born for ourselves, but for our kind, for our neighbours, for our country: it is but selfishness, indolence, a perverse fastidiousness, an unmanliness, and no virtue or praise, to bury our talent in a napkin. — Cardinal Newman.



Along with his domestic and parliamentary concerns, we are to recognise the ferment that was proceeding in Mr. Gladstone's mind upon new veins of theology; but it was an interior working of feeling and reflection, and went forward without much visible relation to the outer acts and facts of his life during this period. As to those, one entry in the diary (Feb. 1st, 1839) tells a sufficient tale for the next two years. 'I find I have, besides family and parliamentary concerns and those of study, *ten* committees on hand: Milbank, Society for Propagation of the Gospel, Church Building Metropolis, Church Commercial School, National Schools inquiry and correspondence, Upper Canada, Clergy, Additional Curates' Fund, Carlton Library, Oxford and Cambridge Club. These things distract and dissipate my mind.' Well they might; for in any man with less than Mr. Gladstone's amazing faculty of rapid and powerful concentration, such dispersion must have been disastrous both to effectiveness and to mental progress. As it is, I find little in the way of central facts to remark in either mental history or public action. He strayed away occasionally from the Fathers and their pastures and dipped into the new literature of the hour, associated with names of dawning popularity. Carlyle he found hard to lay down. Some of Emerson, too, he became

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acquainted with, as we have already seen; but his mind was far too closely filled with transcendentalisms of his own to offer much hospitality to the serene and beautiful transcendentalism of Emerson. He read *Oliver Twist* and *Nicholas Nickleby*, and on the latter he makes a characteristic comment — 'the tone is very human; it is most happy in touches of natural pathos. No church in the book, and the motives are not those of religion.' So with Hallam's *History of Literature*, 'Finished (Oct. 10, 1839) his theological chapter, in which I am sorry to find amidst such merits, what is even far more grievous than his anti-church sarcasms, such notions on original sin as in iv. p. 161.' He found Chillingworth's *Religion of Protestants* 'a work of the most mixed merits,' an ambiguous phrase which I take to mean not that its merits were various, but that they were much mixed with those demerits for which the puritan Cheynell baited the unlucky latitudinarian to death. About this time also he first began Father Paul's famous history of the Council of Trent, a work that always stood as high in his esteem as in Macaulay's, who liked Sarpi the best of all modern historians.

To the great veteran poet of the time Mr. Gladstone's fidelity was unchanging, even down to compositions that the ordinary Wordsworthian gives up: —

> Read aloud Wordsworth's *Cumberland Beggar* and *Peter Bell*. The former is generally acknowledged to be a noble poem. The same justice is not done to the latter; I was more than ever struck with the vivid power of the descriptions, the strong touches of feeling, the skill and order with which the plot upon Peter's conscience is arranged, and the depth of interest which is made to attach to the humblest of quadrupeds. It must have cost great labour, and is an extraordinary poem, both as a whole and in detail.

Let not the scorner forget that Matthew Arnold, that admirable critic and fine poet, confesses to reading *Peter Bell* with pleasure and edification.

In the political field he moved steadily on. Sir R. Peel spoke to him (April 19, 1839) in the House about the debate and wished him to speak after Sheil, if Graham, who

*Catherine Gladstone*
*from a painting.*

was to speak about 8 or 9, could bring him up. Peel showed him several points with regard to the committee which he thought might be urged. 'This is very kind in him as a mark of confidence; and assures me that if, as I suspect, he considers my book as likely to bring me into some embarrassment individually, yet he is willing to let me still act under him, and fight my own battles in that matter as best with God's help I may, which is thoroughly fair. It imposes, however, a great responsibility. I was not presumptuous enough to dream of following Sheil; not that his speech is formidable, but the impression it leaves on the House is. I meant to provoke him. A mean man may fire at a tiger, but it requires a strong and bold one to stand his charge; and the longer I live, the more I feel my own (intrinsically) utter *powerlessness* in the House of Commons. But my principle is this — not to shrink from any such responsibility when laid upon me by a competent person. Sheil, however, did not speak, so I am reserved and may fulfil my own idea, please God, to-night.'

We come now to one of the memorable episodes in this vexed decade of our political history. The sullen demon of slavery died hard. The negro still wore about his neck galling links of the broken chain. The transitory stage of apprenticeship was in some respects even harsher than the bondage from which it was to bring deliverance, and the old iniquity only worked in new ways. The pity and energy of the humane at home drove a perplexed and sluggish government to pass an act for dealing with the abominations of the prisons to which the unhappy blacks were committed in Jamaica. The assembly of that island, a planter oligarchy, resented the new law from the mother country as an invasion of their constitutional rights, and stubbornly refused in their exasperation, even after a local dissolution, to perform duties that were indispensable for working the machinery of administration. The cabinet in consequence asked parliament (April 9th) to suspend the constitution of Jamaica for a term of five years. The tory opposition, led by Peel with all his force, aided by the aversion of a section of the liberals to a measure in which they detected

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a flavour of dictatorship, ran the ministers (May 6th) within five votes of defeat on a cardinal stage.

'I was amused,' says Mr. Gladstone, 'with observing yesterday the differences of countenance and manner in the ministers whom I met on my ride. Ellice (their friend) would not look at me at all. Charles Wood looked but askance and with the hat over the brow. Grey shouted, "Wish you joy!" Lord Howick gave a remarkably civil and smiling nod; and Morpeth a hand salute with all his might, as we crossed in riding. On Monday night after the division, Peel said just as it was known and about to be announced, "Jamaica was a good horse to start."' Of his own share in the performance, Mr. Gladstone only says that he spoke a dry speech to a somewhat reluctant House. 'I cannot work up my matter at all in such a plight. However, considering what it was, they behaved very well. A loud cheer on the announcement of the numbers from our people, in which I did not join.'

To have won the race by so narrow a majority as five seemed to the whigs, wearied of their own impotence and just discredit, a good plea for getting out of office. Peel proceeded to begin the formation of a government, but the operation broke down upon an affair of the bedchamber. He supposed the Queen to object to the removal of any of the ladies of her household, and the Queen supposed him to insist on the removal of them all. The situation was unedifying and nonsensical, but the Queen was not yet twenty, and Lord Melbourne had for once failed to teach a prudent lesson. A few days saw Melbourne back in office, and in office he remained for two years longer.[1]

## II

In June 1839 the understanding arrived at with Miss Catherine Glynne during the previous winter in Sicily, ripened into a definite engagement, and on the 25th of the following July their marriage took place amid much

[1] For Mr. Gladstone's later view of this transaction, see *Gleanings*, i. p. 39. He composed a letter on the subject, which, he says, 'will probably never see the light.'

rejoicing and festivity at Hawarden. At the same time and place, Mary Glynne, the younger sister, was married to Lord Lyttelton. Sir Stephen Glynne, their brother, was the ninth, and as was to happen, the last baronet. Their mother, born Mary Neville, was the daughter of the second Lord Braybrooke and Mary Grenville his wife, sister of the first Marquis of Buckingham. Hence Lady Glynne was one of a historic clan, granddaughter of George Grenville, the minister of American taxation, and niece of William, Lord Grenville, head of the cabinet of All the Talents in 1806. She was first cousin therefore of the younger Pitt, and the Glynnes could boast of a family connection with three prime ministers, or if we choose to add Lord Chatham who married Hester Grenville, with four.[1] 'I told her,' Mr. Gladstone recorded on this occasion of their engagement (June 8th), 'what was my original destination and desire in life; in what sense and manner I remained in connection with politics. . . . I have given her (led by her questions) these passages for canons of our living: —

'Le fronde, onde s'infronda tutto l'orto
Dell' Ortolano eterno, am' io cotanto,
Quanto da lui a lor di bene è porto.'[2]

And Dante again —

'In la sua volontade è nostra pace:
Ella è quel mare, al qual tutto si muove.'[3]

In few human unions have the good hopes and fond wishes of a bridal day been better fulfilled or brought deeper and more lasting content. Sixty long years after, Mr. Gladstone said, 'It would not be possible to unfold in words the value of the gifts which the bounty of Providence

[1] Mr. Gladstone compiled this list of the statesmen in the maternal ancestry of his children: —

| | |
|---|---|
| Right Hon. George Grenville, | Great, great grandfather. |
| Sir W. Wyndham, | Great, great, great grandfather. |
| Lord Chatham, | Great, great granduncle-in-law. |
| Mr. Pitt, | First cousin thrice removed. |
| Lord Grenville, | Great granduncle. |
| Mr. Grenville, | Great granduncle. |

[2] *Paradiso*, xxvi. 64–6 —

'Love for each plant that in the garden grows,
Of the Eternal Gardener, I prove,
Proportioned to the goodness he bestows.' — WRIGHT.

[3] *Ibid.* iii. 85. See above, p. 215.

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has conferred upon me through her.' And the blessing remained radiant and unclouded to the distant end.

At the close of August, after posting across Scotland from Greenock by a route better known now than then to every tourist, the young couple made their way to Fasque, where the new bride found an auspicious approach and the kindest of welcomes. Her 'entrance into her adoptive family was much more formidable than it would be to those who had been less loved, or less influential, or less needed and leant upon, in the home where she was so long a queen.' At Fasque all went as usual. Soon after his arrival, his father communicated that he meant actually to transfer to his sons his Demerara properties — Robertson to have the management. 'This increased wealth, so much beyond my needs, with its attendant responsibility is very burdensome, however on his part the act be beautiful.'

## III

The parliamentary session of 1840 was unimportant and dreary. The government was tottering, the conservative leaders were in no hurry to pluck the pear before it was ripe, and the only men with any animating principle of active public policy in them were Cobden and the League against the Corn Law. The attention of the House of Commons was mainly centred in the case of Stockdale and the publication of debates. But Mr. Gladstone's most earnest thoughts were still far away from what he found to be the dry sawdust of the daily politics, as the following lines may show: —

*March 16th*, 1840. — Manning dined with us. He kindly undertook to revise my manuscript on 'Church Principles.'

*March 18th*. — Yesterday I had a long conversation with James Hope. He came to tell me, with great generosity, that he would always respond to any call, according to the best of his power, which I might make on him for the behalf of the common cause — he had given up all views of advancement in his profession — he had about £400 a year, and this, which includes his fellowship, was quite sufficient for his wants; his time would be devoted

to church objects; in the intermediate region he considered himself as having the first tonsure.

Hope urged strongly the principle, 'Let every man abide in the calling ——' I thought even over strongly. My belief is that he foregoes the ministry from deeming himself unworthy. . . . The object of my letter to Hope was in part to record on paper my abhorrence of party in the church, whether Oxford party or any other.

*March 18th.* — To-day a meeting at Peel's on the China question; considered in the view of censure upon the conduct of the administration, and a motion will accordingly be made objecting to the attempts to force the Chinese to modify their old relations with us, and to the leaving the superintendent without military force. It was decided not to move simultaneously in the Lords — particularly because the radicals would, if there were a double motion, act not on the merits but for the ministry. Otherwise, it seemed to be thought we should carry a motion. The Duke of Wellington said, 'God! if it is carried, they will go,' that they were as near as possible to resignation on the last defeat, and would not stand it again. Peel said, he understood four ministers were then strongly for resigning. The duke also said, our footing in China could not be re-established, unless under some considerable naval and military demonstration, now that matters had gone so far. He appeared pale and shaken, but spoke loud and a good deal, much to the point and with considerable gesticulation. The mind's life I never saw more vigorous.

The Chinese question was of the simplest. British subjects insisted on smuggling opium into China in the teeth of Chinese law. The British agent on the spot began war against China for protecting herself against these malpractices. There was no pretence that China was in the wrong, for in fact the British government had sent out orders that the opium-smugglers should not be shielded; but the orders arrived too late, and war having begun, Great Britain felt bound to see it through, with the result that China was compelled to open four ports, to cede Hong Kong, and to pay an indemnity of six hundred thousand pounds. So true is it that statesmen have no concern with pater nosters, the Sermon on the Mount, or the *vade mecum*

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of the moralist. We shall soon see that this transaction began to make Mr. Gladstone uneasy, as was indeed to be expected in anybody who held that a state should have a conscience.[1] On April 8, 1840, his journal says: 'Read on China. House. . . . Spoke heavily; strongly against the trade and the war, having previously asked whether my speaking out on them would do harm, and having been authorised.' An unguarded expression brought him into a debating scrape, but his speech abounded in the pure milk of what was to be the Gladstonian word: —

I do not know how it can be urged as a crime against the Chinese that they refused provisions to those who refused obedience to their laws whilst residing within their territory. I am not competent to judge how long this war may last, nor how protracted may be its operations, but this I can say, that a war more unjust in its origin, a war more calculated in its progress to cover this country with disgrace, I do not know and I have not read of. Mr. Macaulay spoke last night in eloquent terms of the British flag waving in glory at Canton, and of the animating effect produced upon the minds of our sailors by the knowledge that in no country under heaven was it permitted to be insulted. But how comes it to pass that the sight of that flag always raises the spirits of Englishmen? It is because it has always been associated with the cause of justice, with opposition to oppression, with respect for national rights, with honourable commercial enterprise, but now under the auspices of the noble lord [Palmerston] that flag is hoisted to protect an infamous contraband traffic, and if it were never to be hoisted except as it is now hoisted on the coast of China, we should recoil from its sight with horror, and should never again feel our hearts thrill, as they now thrill, with emotion when it floats magnificently and in pride upon the breeze. . . . Although the Chinese were undoubtedly guilty of much absurd phraseology, of no little ostentatious pride, and of some excess, justice in my opinion is with them, and whilst they the pagans and semi-civilised barbarians have it, we the enlightened and civilised Christians are pursuing objects at variance both with justice and with religion.[2]

[1] See Lord Palmerston's speech, Aug. 10, 1842.

[2] *Hansard*, 3 S. vol. 53, p. 819.

*May* 14*th.* — Consulted [various persons] on opium. All but Sir R. Inglis were on grounds of prudence against its [a motion against the compensation demanded from China] being brought forward. To this majority of friendly and competent persons I have given way, I hope not wrongfully; but I am in dread of the judgment of God upon England for our national iniquity towards China. It has been to me matter of most painful and anxious consideration. I yielded specifically to this; the majority of the persons most trustworthy feel that to make the motion would, our leaders being in such a position and disposition with respect to it, injure the cause. *June* 1*st.* — Meeting of the Society for Suppression of the Slave Trade. [This was the occasion of a speech from Prince Albert, who presided.] Exeter Hall crammed is really a grand spectacle. Samuel Wilberforce a beautiful speaker; in some points resembles Macaulay. Peel excellent. *June* 12*th.* — This evening I voted for the Irish education grant; on the ground that in its principle, according to Lord Stanley's letter, it is identical practically with the English grant of '33–8, and I might have added with the Kildare Place grant. To exclude doctrine from exposition is in my judgment as truly a mutilation of scripture, as to omit bodily portions of the sacred volume.

His first child and eldest son was born (June 3), and Manning and Hope became his godfathers; these two were Mr. Gladstone's most intimate friends at this period. Social diversions were never wanting. One June afternoon he went down to Greenwich, 'Grillion's fish dinner to the Speaker. Great merriment; and an excellent speech from Stanley, "good sense and good nonsense." A modest one from Morpeth. But though we dined at six, these expeditions do not suit me. I am ashamed of paying £2, 10s. for a dinner. But on this occasion the object was to do honour to a dignified and impartial Speaker.' He had been not at all grateful, by the way, for the high honour of admission to Grillion's dining club this year, — 'a thing quite alien to my temperament, which requires more soothing and domestic appliances after the feverish and consuming excitements of party life; but the rules of society oblige me to submit.' As it happened, so narrow is man's foreknow-

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ledge, Grillion's down to the very end of his life, nearly sixty years ahead, had no more faithful or congenial member.

1840.

*July 1st.*—Last evening at Lambeth Palace I had a good deal of conversation with Colonel Gurwood about the Duke of Wellington and about Canada. He told me an anecdote of Lord Seaton which throws light upon his peculiar reserve, and shows it to be a modesty of character, combined no doubt with military habits and notions. When Captain Colborne, and senior officer of his rank in the 21st foot, he [Lord Seaton] was military secretary to General Fox during the war. A majority in his regiment fell vacant, Gen. Fox desired him to ascertain who was the senior captain on the *command*. 'Captain So-and-so of the 80th [I think].' 'Write to Colonel Gordon and recommend him to his royal highness for the vacant majority.' He did it. The answer came to this effect: 'The recommendation will not be refused, but we are surprised to see that it comes in the handwriting of Captain Colborne, the very man who, according to the rules of the service, ought to have this majority.' General Fox had forgotten it, and Captain Colborne had not reminded him! The error was corrected. He (Gurwood, said he had never known the Duke of Wellington speak on the subject of religion but once, when he quoted the story of Oliver Cromwell on his death-bed, and said: 'That state of grace, in my opinion, is a state or habit of doing right, of persevering in duty, and to fall from it is to cease from acting right.' He always attends the service at 8 A.M. in the Chapel Royal, and says it is a duty which ought to be done, and the earlier in the day it is discharged the better. *July 24th.* Heard [James] Hope in the House of Lords against the Chapters bill; and he spoke with such eloquence, learning, lofty sentiment, clear and piercing diction, continuity of argument, just order, sagacious tact, and comprehensive method, as one would say would have required the longest experience as well as the greatest natural gifts. Yet he never acted before, save as counsel for the Edinburgh and Glasgow railway. If hearts are to be moved, it must be by this speech.[1] *July 27th.*—

[1] 'It was the common talk of Oxford how the most distinguished lawyer of the day, a literary man and a critic, on hearing the speech in question, pronounced his prompt verdict on him in the words, "That young man's fortune is made."'—Newman's Funeral Sermon on J. R. Hope-Scott in *Sermons preached on Various Occasions*, p. 269.

Again went over and got up the subject of opium compensation as it respects the Chinese. I spoke thereon 1½ hours for the liberation of my conscience, and to afford the friends of peace opposite an opportunity, of which they would not avail themselves.

In August he tells Mrs. Gladstone how he has been to dine with 'such an odd party at the Guizots'; Austin, radical lawyer; John Mill, radical reviewer; M. Gaskell, Monckton Milnes, Thirlwall, new Bishop of St. David's, George Lewis, poor law commissioner. Not very ill mixed, however. The host is extremely nice.' An odd party indeed; it comprised four at least of the strongest heads in England, and two of the most illustrious names of all the century in Europe.

In March (1840) Mr. Gladstone and Lord Lyttelton went to Eton together to fulfil the ambitious functions of examiner for the Newcastle scholarship. In thanking Mr. Gladstone for his services, Hawtrey speaks of the advantage of public men of his stamp undertaking such duties in the good cause of the established system of education, 'as against the nonsense of utilitarians and radicals.' The questions ran in the familiar mould in divinity, niceties of ancient grammar, obscurities of classical construction, caprices of vocabulary, and all the other points of the old learning. The general merit Mr. Gladstone found 'beyond anything possible or conceivable' when he was a boy at Eton a dozen years before: —

We sit with the boys (39 in number) and make about ten hours a day in looking over papers with great minuteness. . . . Although it is in quantity hard work, it is lightened by a warm interest, and the refreshment of early love upon a return to this sweet place. It is work apart from human passion, and is felt as a moral relaxation, though it is not one in any other sense. . . . This is a curious experience to me, of jaded body and mind refreshed. I propose for Latin theme a little sentence of Burke's which runs to this effect, 'Flattery corrupts both the receiver and the giver; and adulation is not of more service to the people than to kings.' *April 2nd.* — The statistics become excessively interesting. Henry Hallam gained, and now stands second [the brother of his dead friend]. *April 3rd.* — In, 6 hours; out, from 4 to 5 hours more upon the

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papers. Vinegar, thank God, carries my eyes through so much MS., and the occupation is deeply interesting, especially on Hallam's account. Our labours were at one time anxious and critical, the two leaders being 1388 and 1390 respectively. At night, however, all was decided. *April 4th.* 12.2. — *Viva voce* for fourteen select. At 2½ Seymour was announced scholar to the boys, and chaired forthwith. Hallam, medallist. It was quite overpowering.

Henry Hallam was the second son of the historian, the junior of Arthur by some fourteen or fifteen years. Mr. Gladstone more than a generation later described a touching supplement to his Eton story. 'In 1850 Henry Hallam had attained an age exceeding only by some four years the limit of his brother's life. During that autumn I was travelling post between Turin and Genoa, upon my road to Naples. A family coach met us on the road, and the glance of a moment at the inside showed me the familiar face of Mr. Hallam. I immediately stopped my carriage, descended, and ran after his. On overtaking it, I found the dark clouds accumulated on his brow, and learned with indescribable pain that he was on his way home from Florence, where he had just lost his second and only remaining son, from an attack corresponding in its suddenness and its devastating rapidity with that which had struck down his eldest born son seventeen years before.'

At Fasque, where his autumn sojourn began in September, he threw himself with special ardour into his design for a college for Scotch episcopalians, especially for the training of clergy. He wrote to Manning (Aug. 31, 1840):—

Hope and I have been talking and writing upon a scheme for raising money to found in Scotland a college akin in structure to the Romish seminaries in England; that is to say, partly for training the clergy, partly for affording an education to the children of the gentry and others who now go chiefly to presbyterian schools or are tended at home by presbyterian tutors. I think £25,000 would do it, and that it might be got. I must have my father's sanction before committing myself to it. Hope's intended

absence for the winter is a great blow. Were he to be at home I do not doubt that great progress might be made. In the kirk toil and trouble, double, double, the fires burn and cauldrons bubble: and though I am not sanguine as to very speedy or extensive resumption by the church of her spiritual rights, she may have a great part to play. At present she is very weakly manned, and this is the way I think to strengthen the crew.

The scheme expanded as time went on. His father threw himself into it with characteristic energy and generosity, contributing many thousand pounds, for the sum required greatly exceeded the modest figure above mentioned. Mr. Gladstone conducted a laborious and sometimes vexatious correspondence in the midst of more important public cares. Plans were mature, and adequate funds were forthcoming, and in the autumn of 1842 Hope and the two Gladstones made what they found an agreeable tour, examining the various localities for a site, and finally deciding on a spot 'on a mountain-stream, ten miles from Perth, at the very gate of the highlands.' It was 1846 before the college at Glenalmond was opened for its destined purposes.[1] We all know examples of men holding opinions with trenchancy, decision, and even a kind of fervour, and yet with no strong desire to spread them. Mr. Gladstone was at all times of very different temper; consumed with missionary energy and the fire of ardent propagandism.

He laboured hard at the fourth edition of his book, sometimes getting eleven hours of work, 'a good day as times go,' — Montesquieu, Burke, Bacon, Clarendon, and others of the masters of civil and historic wisdom being laid under ample contribution. By Christmas he was at Hawarden. In January he made a speech at a meeting held in Liverpool for the foundation of a church union, and a few days later he hurried off to Walsall to help his brother John, then the tory candidate, and a curious incident happened: —

I either provided myself, or I was furnished from headquarters, with a packet of pamphlets in favour of the corn laws. These I

[1] The reader who cares for further particulars may consult the *Memoirs of J. R. Hope-Scott*, i. pp. 248, 281–8; and ii. p. 291.

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read, and I extracted from them the chief material of my speeches. I dare say it was sad stuff, furbished up at a moment's notice. We carried the election. Cobden sent me a challenge to attend a public discussion of the subject. Whether this was quite fair, I am not certain, for I was young, made no pretension to be an expert, and had never opened my lips in parliament on the subject. But it afforded me an excellent opportunity to decline with modesty and with courtesy as well as reason. I am sorry to say that, to the best of my recollection, I did far otherwise, and the pith of my answer was made to be that I regarded the Anti-Corn Law League as no better than a big borough-mongering association. Such was my first capital offence in the matter of protection; redeemed from public condemnation only by obscurity.

The letters are preserved, but a sentence or two from Mr. Gladstone's to Cobden are enough. 'The phrases which you quote from a report in the *Times* have reference, not to the corn law, but to the Anti-Corn Law League and its operations in Walsall. Complaining apparently of these, you desire me to meet you in discussion, not upon the League but upon the corn law. I cannot conceive two subjects more distinct. I admit the question of the repeal of the corn laws to be a subject fairly open to discussion, although I have a strong opinion against it. But as to the Anti-Corn Law League, I do not admit that any equitable doubt can be entertained as to the character of its present proceedings; and, excepting a casual familiarity of phrase, I adhere rigidly to the substance of the sentiments which I have expressed. I know not who may be answerable for these measures, nor was your name known to me, or in my recollection at the time when I spoke.' Time soon changed all this, and showed who was teacher and who the learner.

By and by the session of 1841 opened, the whigs moving steadily towards their fall, and Mr. Gladstone almost overwhelmed with floods of domestic business. He settled in the pleasant region which is to the metropolis what Delphi was to the habitable earth, and where, if we include in it Downing Street, he passed all the most important years of his life

in London.[1] Though he speaks of being overwhelmed by domestic business, and he was undoubtedly hard beset by all the demands of early housekeeping, yet he very speedily recovered his balance. He resisted now and always as jealously as he could those promiscuous claims on time and attention by which men of less strenuous purpose suffer the effectiveness of their lives to be mutilated. 'I well know,' he writes to his young wife who was expecting him to join her at Hagley, 'you would not have me come on any conditions with which one's sense of duty could not be quieted, and would (I hope) send me back by the next train. These delays are to you a practical exemplification of the difficulty of reconciling domestic and political engagements. The case is one that scarcely admits of compromise; the least that is required in order to the fulfilment of one's duty is constant bodily presence in London until the fag-end of the session is fairly reached.'

Here are a few examples of the passing days: —

*March 12th*, 1841. — *Tracts for the Times*, No. 90; ominous. *March 13th*. — Went to see Reform Club. Sat to Bradley 2½–4. London Library committee. Carlton Library committee. Corrected two proof-sheets. Conversed an hour and a half with Mr. Richmond, who came to tea, chiefly on my plan for a picture-life of Christ. Chess with C. [his wife]. *March 14th* (*Sunday*). — Communion (St. James's), St. Margaret's afternoon. Wrote on Ephes. v. 1, and read it aloud to servants. *March 20th*. — City to see Freshfield. Afternoon service in Saint Paul's. What an image, what a crowd of images! Amidst the unceasing din, and the tumult of men hurrying this way and that for gold, or pleasure, or some self-desire, the vast fabric thrusts itself up to heaven and firmly plants itself on soil begrudged to an occupant that yields no lucre. But the city cannot thrust forth its cathedral; and from thence arises the harmonious measured voice of intercession from day to day. The church praying and deprecating continually for the living mass that are dead while they live, from out of the very

[1] His first house was 13 Carlton House Terrace, then his father gave him 6 Carlton Gardens. In 1856 he purchased 11 Carlton House Terrace, which was his London home until 1875. From 1876 to 1880 he occupied 73 Harley Street.

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centre of that mass; silent and lonesome is her shrine, amidst the noise, the thunder of multitudes. Silent, lonesome, motionless, yet full of life; for were we not more dead than the stones, which built into that sublime structure witness continually to what is great and everlasting, — did priest or chorister, or the casual worshipper but apprehend the grandeur of his function in that spot, — the very heart must burst with the tide of emotions gathering within it. Oh for speed, speed to the wings of that day when this glorious unfulfilled outline of a church shall be charged as a hive with the operations of the Spirit of God and of His war against the world; when the intervals of space and time within its walls, now untenanted by any functions of that holy work, shall be thickly occupied; and when the glorious sights and sounds which shall arrest the passenger in his haste that he may sanctify his purposes by worship, shall be symbols still failing to express the fulness of the power of God developed among His people.

*March* 21. — Wrote on 1 Thess. v. 17, and read it to servants. Read *The Young Communicants;* Bishop Hall's *Life.* It seems as if at this time the number and close succession of occupations without any great present reward of love or joy, and chiefly belonging to an earthly and narrow range, were my special trial and discipline. Other I seem hardly to have any of daily pressure. Health in myself and those nearest me; (comparative) wealth and success; no strokes from God; no opportunity of pardoning others, for none offend me.

*April* 3. — Two or three nights ago Mrs. Wilbraham told Catherine that Stanley was extremely surprised to find, after his speech on the Tamworth and Rugby railway bill, that Peel had been very much annoyed with the expression he had used: 'that his right hon. friend had in pleading for the bill made use of all that art and ingenuity with which he so well knew how to dress up a statement for that House,' and that he showed his annoyance very much by his manner to him, S., afterwards. He, upon reflecting that this was the probable cause, wrote a note to Peel to set matters to rights, in which he succeeded; but he thought Peel very thin-skinned. Wm. Cowper told me the other day at Milnes's that Lord John Russell is remarkable among his colleagues for

his anxiety during the recess for the renewal of the session of parliament; that he always argues for fixing an early day of meeting, and finds pleas for it, and finds the time long until it recommences.

A visit to Nuneham (April 12) and thence to Oxford brought him into the centre of the tractarians. He saw much of Hamilton, went to afternoon service at Littlemore, breakfasted in company with Newman at Merton, had a long conversation with Pusey on Tract 90, and gathered that Newman thought differently of the Council of Trent from what he had thought a year or two back, and that he differed from Pusey in thinking the English reformation uncatholic. Mr. Gladstone replied that No. 90 had the appearance to his mind of being written by a man, if in, not of, the church of England; and would be interpreted as exhibiting the Tridentine system for the ideal, the anglican for a mutilated and *just* tolerable actual. Then in the same month he 'finished Palmer on the Articles, deep, earnest, and generally trustworthy. Worked upon a notion of private eucharistical devotions, to be chiefly compiled; and attended a meeting about colonial bishoprics,' where he spoke but indifferently.

## IV

In 1841 the whigs in the expiring hours of their reign launched parliament and parties upon what was to be the grand marking controversy of the era. To remedy the disorder into which expenditure, mainly due to highhanded foreign policy, had brought the national finance, they proposed to reconstruct the fiscal system by reducing the duties on foreign sugar and timber, and substituting for Wellington's corn law a fixed eight shilling duty on imported wheat. The wiser heads, like Lord Spencer, were aware that as an electioneering expedient the new policy would bring them little luck, but their position in any case was desperate. The handling of their proposals was curiously maladroit; and even if it had been otherwise, ministerial repute alike for com-

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petency and for sincerity was so damaged both in the House of Commons and the country, that their doom was certain. The reduction of the duty on slave-grown sugar from foreign countries was as obnoxious to the abolitionist as it was disadvantageous to the West Indian proprietors, and both of these powerful sections were joined by the corn-grower, well aware that his turn would come next. Many meetings took place at Sir Robert Peel's upon the sugar resolutions, and Mr. Gladstone worked up the papers and figures so as to be ready to speak if necessary. At one of these meetings, by the way, he thought it worth while to write down that Peel had the tradesmen's household books upon his desk — a circumstance that he mentioned also to the present writer, when by chance we found ourselves together in the same room fifty years later.

On May 10th, his speech on the sugar duties came off in due course. In this speech he took the sound point that the new arrangement must act as an encouragement to the slave trade, 'that monster which, while war, pestilence, and famine were slaying their thousands, slew from year to year with unceasing operation its tens of thousands.' As he went on, he fell upon Macaulay for being member of a cabinet that was thus deserting a cause in which Macaulay's father had been the unseen ally of Wilberforce, and the pillar of his strength, — 'a man of profound benevolence, of acute understanding, of indefatigable industry, and of that self-denying temper which is content to work in secret, and to seek for its reward beyond the grave.' Macaulay was the last man to suffer rebuke in silence, and he made a sharp reply on the following day, followed by a magnanimous peace-making behind the Speaker's chair.

Meanwhile the air was thick and loud with rumours. Lord Eliot told Mr. Gladstone in the middle of the debate that there had been a stormy cabinet that morning, and that ministers had at last made up their minds to follow Lord Spencer's advice, to resign and not to dissolve. When the division on the sugar duties was taken, ministers were beaten (May 19) by a majority of 36, after fine performances from Sir Robert, and a good one from Palmerston on the other

side. The cabinet, with a tenacity incredible in our own day, were still for holding on until their whole scheme, with the popular element of cheap bread in it, was fully before the country. Peel immediately countered them by a vote of want of confidence, and this was carried (June 4) by a majority of one : —

On Saturday morning the division in the House of Commons presented a scene of the most extraordinary excitement. While we were in our lobby we were told that we were 312 and the government either 311 or 312. It was also known that they had brought down Lord —— who was reported to be in a state of total idiocy. After returning to the House I went to sit near the bar, where the other party were coming in. We had all been counted, 312, and the tellers at the government end had counted to 308; there remained behind this unfortunate man, reclining in a chair, evidently in total unconsciousness of what was proceeding. Loud cries had been raised from our own side, when it was seen that he was being brought up, to clear the bar that the whole House might witness the scene, and every one stood up in intense curiosity. There were now only this figure, less human even than an automaton, and two persons, R. Stuart and E. Ellice, pushing the chair in which he lay. A loud cry of 'Shame, Shame,' burst from our side; those opposite were silent. Those three were counted without passing the tellers, and the moment after we saw that our tellers were on the right in walking to the table, indicating that we had won. Fremantle gave out the numbers, and then the intense excitement raised by the sight we had witnessed found vent in our enthusiastic (quite irregular) hurrah with great waving of hats. Upon looking back I am sorry to think how much I partook in the excitement that prevailed; but how could it be otherwise in so extraordinary a case ? I thought Lord John's a great speech — it was delivered too under the pressure of great indisposition. He has risen with adversity. He seemed rather below par as a leader in 1835 when he had a clear majority, and the ball nearly at his foot; in each successive year the strength of his government has sunk and his own has risen.

Then came the dissolution, and an election memorable in

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the history of party. Thinking quite as much of the Scotch college, the colonial bishoprics, and Tract Ninety, as of sugar duties or the corn law, Mr. Gladstone hastened to Newark. He was delighted with the new colleague who had been provided for him. 'As a candidate,' he writes to his wife, 'Lord John Manners is excellent; his speaking is popular and effective, and he is a good canvasser, by virtue not I think of effort, but of a general kindliness and warmth of disposition which naturally shows itself to every one. Nothing can be more satisfactory than to have such a partner.' In his address Mr. Gladstone only touched on the poor law and the corn law. On the first he would desire liberal treatment for aged, sick, and widowed poor, and reasonable discretion to the local administrators of the law. As to the second, the protection of native agriculture is an object of the first economical and national importance, and should be secured by a graduated scale of duties on foreign grain. 'Manners and I,' he says, 'were returned as protectionists. My speeches were of absolute dulness, but I have no doubt they were sound in the sense of my leaders Peel and Graham and others of the party.' The election offered no new incidents. One old lady reproached him for not being content with keeping bread and sugar from the people, but likewise by a new faith, the mysterious monster of Puseyism, stealing away from them the bread of life. He found the wesleyans shaky, partly because they disliked his book and were afraid of the Oxford Tracts, and partly from his refusal to subscribe to their school. Otherwise, flags, bands, suppers, processions, all went on in high ceremonial order as before. Day after day passed with nothing worse than the threat of a blue candidate, but one Sunday morning (June 26) as people came out of church, they found an address on the walls and a dark rumour got afloat that the new man had brought heavy bags of money. For this rumour there was no foundation, but it inspired annoying fears in the good and cheerful hopes in the bad. The time was in any case too short, and at four o'clock on June 29 the poll was found to be, Gladstone 633, Manners 630, Hobhouse 391. His own election safely over, Mr. Gladstone turned to take part in a fierce

contest in which Sir Stephen Glynne was candidate for the representation of Flintshire, but 'bribery, faggotry, abduction, personation, riot, factious delays, landlord's intimidations, partiality of authorities,' carried the day, and to the bitter dismay of Hawarden, Sir Stephen was narrowly beaten. One ancient dame, overwhelmed by the defeat of the family that for eighty years she had idolised, cried aloud to Mrs. Gladstone, 'I am a great woman for thinking of the Lord, but O, my dear lady, this has put it all out of my head.' The election involved him in what would now be thought a whimsical correspondence with one of the Grosvenor family, who complained of Mr. Gladstone for violating the sacred canons of electioneering etiquette by canvassing Lord Westminster's tenants. 'I did think,' says the wounded patrician, 'that interference between a landlord with whose opinions you were acquainted and his tenants was not justifiable according to those laws of delicacy and propriety which I considered binding in such cases.'

At last he was able to snatch a holiday with his wife and child by the seaside at Hoylake, which rather oddly struck him as being like Pæstum without the temples. He read away at Gibbon and Dante until he went to Hawarden, partly to consider the state of its financial affairs; as to these something is to be said later. 'Walked alone in the Hawarden grounds,' he says one day during his stay; 'ruminated on the last-named subject [accounts], also on anticipated changes [in government]. I can digest the crippled religious action of the state; but I cannot be a party to exacting by blood opium compensation from the Chinese.' Then to London (Aug. 18). He attended the select party meetings at Sir Robert Peel's and Lord Aberdeen's. Dining at Grillion's he heard Stanley, speaking of the new parliament, express a high opinion of Roebuck as an able man and clear speaker, likely to make a figure; and also of Cobden as a resolute perspicacious man, familiar with all the turns of his subject; and when the new House assembled, he had made up his mind for himself that '*Cobden will be a worrying man on corn.*' This was Cobden's first entry into the House. At last the whigs were put out

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of office by a majority of 91, and Peel undertook to form a government.

*Aug.* 31/41. — In consequence of a note received this morning from Sir Robert Peel I went to him at half-past eleven. The following is the substance of a quarter of an hour's conversation. He said: 'In this great struggle, in which we have been and are to be engaged, the chief importance will attach to questions of finance. It would not be in my power to undertake the business of chancellor of the exchequer in detail; I therefore have asked Goulburn to fill that office, and I shall be simply first lord. I think we shall be very strong in the House of Commons if as a part of this arrangement you will accept the post of vice-president of the board of trade, and conduct the business of that department in the House of Commons, with Lord Ripon as president. I consider it an office of the highest importance, and you will have my unbounded confidence in it.'[1]

I said, 'of the importance and responsibility of that office at the present time I am well aware; but it is right that I should say as strongly as I can, that I really am not fit for it. I have no general knowledge of trade whatever; with a few questions I am acquainted, but they are such as have come across me incidentally.' He said, 'The satisfactory conduct of an office of that kind must after all depend more upon the intrinsic qualities of the man, than upon the precise amount of his previous knowledge. I also think you will find Lord Ripon a perfect master of these subjects, and depend upon it with these appointments at the board of trade we shall carry the whole commercial interests of the country with us.'

[1] 'At that period the board of trade was the department which administered to a great extent the functions that have since passed principally into the hands of the treasury, connected with the fiscal laws of the country.' — *Mr. Gladstone at Leeds*, Oct. 8, 1881. In 1880, writing to Mr. Chamberlain, then president, he says: 'If you were to look back to the records of your department thirty-five and forty years ago, you would find how much of the public trade business was transacted in it. Revenue was then largely involved: and hence, I imagine, it came about that this business was taken over in a great degree by the treasury. I myself have drawn up new tariffs in both, at the B. of T. in 1842 and 1844–5, and at the treasury in 1853 and 1860. Why and how the old B. of T. functions also passed in part to the F. O. I do not so well know.'

He resumed, 'If there be any other arrangement that you would prefer, my value and "affectionate regard" for you would make me most desirous to effect it so far as the claims of others would permit. To be perfectly frank and unreserved, I should tell you, that there are many reasons which would have made me wish to send you to Ireland; but upon the whole I think that had better not be done. Some considerations connected with the presbyterians of Ireland make me prefer on the whole that we should adopt a different plan.[1] Then, if I had had the exchequer, I should have asked you to be financial secretary to the treasury; but under the circumstances I have mentioned, that would be an office of secondary importance and I am sure you will not estimate that I now propose to you by the mere name which it bears.' He also made an allusion to the admiralty of which I do not retain the exact form. But I rather interposed and said, 'My objection on the score of fitness would certainly apply with even increased force to anything connected with the military and naval services of the country, for of them I know nothing. Nor have I any other object in view; there is no office to which I could designate myself. I think it my duty to act upon your judgment as to my qualifications. If it be your deliberate wish to make me vice-president of the board of trade, I will not decline it; I will endeavour to put myself into harness, and to prepare myself for the place in the best manner I can; but it really is an apprenticeship.' He said, 'I hope you will be content to act upon the sense which others entertain of your suitableness for this office in particular, and I think it will be a good arrangement both with a view to the present conduct of business and to the brilliant destinies which I trust are in store for you.' I answered, that I was deeply grateful for his many acts of confidence and kindness; and that I would at once assent to the plan he had proposed, only begging him to observe that I had mentioned my unfitness under a very strong sense of duty and of the facts, and not by any means as a mere matter of ceremony. I then added that I thought I should but ill respond to his confidence if I did not mention to him a subject connected with his policy which might raise a difficulty in my mind.

[1] I suppose this points to incompatibility in the fevers of the hour between protestant Ulster and a Puseyite chief secretary.

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'I cannot,' I said, 'reconcile it to my sense of right to exact from China, as a term of peace, compensation for the opium surrendered to her.' . . . He agreed that it was best to mention it; observed that in consequence of the shape in which the Chinese affair came into the hands of the new government, they would not be wholly unfettered; seemed to hint that under any other circumstances the vice-president of board of trade need not so much mind what was done in the other departments, but remarked that at present every question of foreign relations and many more would be very apt to mix themselves with the department of trade. He thought I had better leave the question suspended.

I hesitated a moment before coming away and said it was only from my anxiety to review what I had said, and to be sure that I had made a clean breast on the subject of my unfitness for the department of trade. Nothing could be more friendly and warm than his whole language and demeanour. It has always been my hope, that I might be able to avoid this class of public employment. On this account I have not endeavoured to train myself for them. The place is very distasteful to me, and what is of more importance, I fear I may hereafter demonstrate the unfitness I have to-day only stated. However, it comes to me, I think, as a matter of plain duty; it may be all the better for not being according to my own bent and leaning; I must forthwith go to work, as a reluctant schoolboy meaning well.

*Sept.* 3. — This day I went to Claremont to be sworn in. When the council was constructed, the Duke of Buckingham and Lord Liverpool were first called in to take their oaths and seats; then the remaining four followed, Lincoln, Eliot, Ernest Bruce, and I. The Queen sat at the head of the table, composed but dejected — one could not but feel for her, all through the ceremonial. We knelt down to take the oaths of allegiance and supremacy and stood up to take (I think) the councillor's oath, then kissed the Queen's hand, then went round the table shaking hands with each member, beginning from Prince Albert who sat on the Queen's right, and ending with Lord Wharncliffe on her left. We then sat at the lower end of the table, excepting Lord E. Bruce, who went to his place behind the Queen as vice-

chamberlain. Then the chancellor first and next the Duke of Buckingham were sworn to their respective offices. C. Greville forgot the duke's privy seal and sent him off without it; the Queen corrected him and gave it. . . . Then were read and approved several orders in council; among which was one assigning a district to a church and another appointing Lord Ripon and me to act in matters of trade. These were read aloud by the Queen in a very clear though subdued voice; and she repeated 'Approved' after each. Upon that relating to Lord R. and myself we were called up and kissed hands again. Then the Queen rose, as did all the members of the council, and retired bowing. We had luncheon in the same room half an hour later and went off. The Duke of Wellington went in an open carriage with a pair; all our other grand people with four. Peel looked shy all through. I visited Claremont once before, 27 years ago I think, as a child, to see the place, soon after the Princess Charlotte's death. It corresponded pretty much with my impressions.

He secured his re-election at Newark on September 14 without opposition, and without trouble, beyond the pressure of a notion rooted in the genial mind of his constituency that as master of the mint he would have an unlimited command of public coin for all purposes whether general or particular. His reflections upon his ministerial position are of much biographic interest. He had evidently expected inclusion in the cabinet: —

*Sept.* 16. — Upon quietly reviewing past times, and the degree of confidence which Sir Robert Peel had for years, habitually I may say, reposed in me, and especially considering its climax, in my being summoned to the meetings immediately preceding the debate on the address in August, I am inclined to think, after allowing for the delusions of self love, that there is not a perfect correspondence between the tenor of the past on the one hand, and my present appointment and the relations in which it places me to the administration on the other. He may have made up his mind at those meetings that I was not qualified for the consultations of a government, nor would there be anything strange in this, except the supposition that he had not seen it before. Having

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however taken the alarm (so to speak) upon the invitation at that time, and been impressed with the idea that it savoured of cabinet office, I considered and consulted on the Chinese question, which I regarded as a serious impediment to office of that description, and I had provisionally contemplated saying to Peel in case he should offer me Ireland with the cabinet, to reply that I would gladly serve his government in the secretaryship, but that I feared his Chinese measures would hardly admit of my acting in the cabinet. I am very sorry now to think that I may have been guilty of an altogether absurd presumption, in dreaming of the cabinet. But it was wholly suggested by that invitation. And I still think that there must have been some consultation and decision relating to me in the interval between the meetings and the formation of the new ministry, which produced some alteration. . . . In confirmation of the notion I have recorded above, I am distinct in the recollection that there was a shyness in Peel's manner and a downward eye, when he opened the conversation and made the offer, not usual with him in speaking to me.

In after years, he thus described his position when he went to the board of trade: —

I was totally ignorant both of political economy and of the commerce of the country. I might have said, as I believe was said by a former holder of the vice-presidency, that my mind was in regard to all those matters a 'sheet of white paper,' except that it was doubtless coloured by a traditional prejudice of protection, which had then quite recently become a distinctive mark of conservatism. In a spirit of ignorant mortification I said to myself at the moment: the science of politics deals with the government of men, but I am set to govern packages. In my journal for Aug. 2 I find this recorded: 'Since the address meetings' (which were quasi-cabinets) 'the idea of the Irish secretaryship had nestled imperceptibly in my mind.'[1]

The vice-presidency was the post, by the way, impudently proposed four years later by the whigs to Cobden, after he had taught both whigs and tories their business. Mr. Gladstone,

[1] Autobiographic note.

at least, was quick to learn the share of 'packages' in the government of men.

*Sept.* 30. — Closing the month, and a period of two years comprehended within this book, I add a few words. My position is changed by office. In opposition I was frequently called, or sometimes at least, to the confidential councils of the party on a variety of subjects. In office, I shall of course have to do with the department of trade and with little or nothing beyond. There is some point in the query of the *Westminster Review : Whether my appointments are a covet satire ?* But they bring great advantages; much less responsibility, much less anxiety. I could not have made myself answerable for what I expect the cabinet will do in China. It must be admitted that it presents an odd appearance, when a person whose mind and efforts have chiefly ranged within the circle of subjects connected with the church, is put into office of the most different description. It looks as if the first object were to neutralise his mischievous tendencies. But I am in doubt whether to entertain this supposition would be really a compliment to the discernment of my superiors, or a breach of charity; therefore it is best not entertained.

Paragraphs appeared in newspapers imputing to Mr. Gladstone a strong reprobation of the prime minister's opinions upon church affairs, and he thought it worth while to write to Sir Robert a strong (and most excessively lengthy) disclaimer of being, among other things, an object of hope to unbending tories as against their moderate and cautious leader.[1] 'Should party spirit,' he went on, 'run very high against your commercial measures, I have no doubt that the venom of my religious opinions will be plentifully alleged to have infused itself into your policy even in that direction, . . . and more than ever will be heard of your culpability in taking into office a person of my bigoted and extreme sentiments.' Peel replied (October 19, 1841) with kindness and good sense. He had not taken the trouble to read the

[1] It would appear from the manuscript at the British Museum, that Macaulay's sentence about Mr. Gladstone as the rising hope of the stern and unbending tories, which later events made long so famous and so tiresome, was a happy afterthought, written in along the margin.

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paragraph; he had read the works from which a mischievous industry had tried to collect means of defaming their author; he found nothing in them in the most distant manner to affect political co-operation; and he signed his name to the letter, 'with an esteem and regard, which are proof against evil-minded attempts to sow jealousy and discord.'[1]

[1] Parker's *Peel*, ii. pp. 514–17.

# CHAPTER VIII

## PEEL'S GOVERNMENT

(*1842–1844*)

In many of the most important rules of public policy Sir R. Peel's government surpassed generally the governments which have succeeded it, whether liberal or conservative. Among them I would mention purity in patronage, financial strictness, loyal adherence to the principle of public economy, jealous regard to the rights of parliament, a single eye to the public interest, strong aversion to extension of territorial responsibilities and a frank admission of the rights of foreign countries as equal to those of their own. — Mr. Gladstone (1880).[1]



Of the four or five most memorable administrations of the century, the great conservative government of Sir Robert Peel was undoubtedly one. It laid the groundwork of our solid commercial policy, it established our railway system, it settled the currency, and, by no means least, it gave us a good national character in Europe as lovers of moderation, equity, and peace. Little as most members of the new cabinet saw it, their advent definitely marked the rising dawn of an economic era. If you had to constitute new societies, Peel said to Croker, then you might on moral and social grounds prefer cornfields to cotton factories, and you might like an agricultural population better than a manufacturing; as it was, the national lot was cast, and statesmen were powerless to turn back the tide. The food of the people, their clothing, the raw material for their industry, their education, the conditions under which women and children were suffered to toil, markets for the products of loom and forge and furnace and mechanic's shop, — these were slowly making their way into the central field of political vision, and

[1] Undated fragment of letter to the Queen. See Appendix.

BOOK II. 1842.

taking the place of fantastic follies about foreign dynasties and the balance of power as the true business of the British statesman. On the eve of entering parliament (September 17, 1832), Mr. Gladstone recounts some articles of his creed at the time to his friend Gaskell, and to modern eyes a curious list it is. The first place is given to his views on the relative merits of Pedro, Miguel, Donna Maria, in respect of the throne of Portugal. The second goes to Poland. The third to the affairs of Lombardy. Free trade comes last. This was still the lingering fashion of the moment, and it died hard.

The new ministry contained an unusual number of men of mark and capacity, and they were destined to form a striking group. At their head was a statesman whose fame grows more impressive with time, not the author or inspirer of large creative ideas, but with what is at any rate next best — a mind open and accessible to those ideas, and endowed with such gifts of skill, vigilance, caution, and courage as were needed for the government of a community rapidly passing into a new stage of its social growth. One day in February 1842, he sent for Mr. Gladstone on some occasion of business. Peel happened not to be well, and in the course of the conversation his doctor called. Sir James Graham who had come in, said to his junior in Peel's absence with the physician, 'The pressure upon him is immense. We never had a minister who was so truly a first minister as he is. He makes himself felt in every department, and is really cognisant of the affairs of each. Lord Grey could not master such an amount of business. Canning could not do it. Now he is an actual minister, and is indeed *capax imperii*.' Next to Peel as parliamentary leaders stood Graham himself and Stanley. They had both of them sat in the cabinet of Lord Grey, and now found themselves the colleagues of the bitterest foes of Grey's administration. As we have seen, Mr. Gladstone pronounces Graham to have known more about economic subjects than all the rest of the government put together. Such things had hitherto been left to men below the first rank in the hierarchy of public office, like Huskisson. Pedro and Miguel held the field.

CHAP. VIII.

ÆT. 33.

Mr. Gladstone's own position is described in an autobiographic fragment of his last years: —

When I entered parliament in 1832, the great controversy between protection or artificial restraint and free trade, of which Cobden was the leading figure, did not enter into the popular controversies of the day, and was still in the hands of the philosophers. My father was an active and effective local politician, and the protectionism which I inherited from him and from all my youthful associations was qualified by a thorough acceptance of the important preliminary measures of Mr. Huskisson, of whom he was the first among the local supporters. Moreover, for the first six years or so of my parliamentary life free trade was in no way a party question, and it only became strictly such in 1841 at, and somewhat before, the general election, when the whig government, *in extremis*, proposed a fixed duty upon corn. My mind was in regard to it a sheet of white paper, but I accepted the established conditions in *the lump*, and could hardly do otherwise. In 1833 only, the question was debated in the House of Commons, and the speech of the mover against the corn laws made me uncomfortable. But the reply of Sir James Graham restored my peace of mind. I followed the others with a languid interest. Yet I remember being struck with the essential unsoundness of the argument of Mr. Villiers. It was this. Under the present corn law our trade, on which we depend, is doomed, for our manufacturers cannot possibly contend with the manufacturers of the continent if they have to pay wages regulated by the protection price of food, while their rivals pay according to the natural or free trade price. The answer was obvious. 'Thank you. We quite understand you. Your object is to get down the wages of your workpeople.' It was Cobden who really set the argument on its legs; and it is futile to compare any other man with him as the father of our system of free trade.

I had in 1840 to dabble in this question, and on the wrong side of it.[1] . . . The matter passed from my mind, full of churches and church matters, in which I was now gradually acquiring knowledge. In 1841 the necessities of the whig government led to a further development of the great controversy; but I

[1] See above, p. 232.

BOOK II. 1842.

interfered only in the colonial part of it in connection with the colonies and the slave trade to Porto Rico and Brazil. We West Indians were now great philanthropists! When Sir Robert Peel assumed the government he had become deeply committed to protection, which in the last two or three years had become the subject of a commanding controversy. I suppose that at Newark I followed suit, but I have no records. On the change of government Peel, with much judgment, offered me the vice-presidentship of the board of trade. On sound principles of party discipline, I took the office at once; and having taken it I set to work with all my might as a worker. In a very short time I came to form a low estimate of the knowledge and information of Lord Ripon; and of the cabinet Sir James Graham, I think, knew most. And now the stones of which my protectionism was built up began to get uncomfortably loose. When we came to the question of the tariff, we were all nearly on a par in ignorance, and we had a very bad adviser in Macgregor, secretary to the board of trade. But I had the advantage of being able to apply myself with an undivided attention. My assumption of office at the board of trade was followed by hard, steady, and honest work; and every day so spent beat like a battering ram on the unsure fabric of my official protectionism. By the end of the year I was far gone in the opposite sense. I had to speak much on these questions in the session of 1842, but it was always done with great moderation.

II

The case on the accession of the new ministers was difficult. Peel himself has drawn the picture. By incompetent finance, by reckless colonial expenditure, by solving political difficulties through gifts or promises of cash from the British treasury, by war and foreign relations hovering on the verge of war and necessitating extended preparations, the whigs had brought the national resources into an embarrassment that was extreme. The accumulated deficits of five years had become a heavy incubus, and the deficit of 1842–3 was likely to be not less than two and a half millions more. Commerce and manufactures were languishing. Distress

was terrible. Poor-rates were mounting, and grants-in-aid would extend impoverishment from the factory districts to the rural. 'Judge then,' said Peel, 'whether we can with safety retrograde in manufactures.'[1]

So grave a crisis could only be met by daring remedies. With the highest courage, moral courage no less than political, Peel resolved to ask parliament to let him raise four or five millions a year by income-tax, in order to lower the duties on the great articles of consumption, and by reforming the tariff both to relieve trade, and to stimulate and replenish the reciprocal flow of export and import. That he at this time, or perhaps in truth at any time, had acquired complete mastery of those deeper principles and wider aspects of free trade of which Adam Smith had been the great exponent — principles afterwards enforced by the genius of Cobden with such admirable skill, persistency, and patriotic spirit — there was nothing to show. Such a scheme had no originality in it. Huskisson, and men of less conspicuous name, had ten years earlier urged the necessity of a new general system of taxation, based upon remission of duty on raw materials and on articles of consumption, and upon the imposition of an income-tax. The famous report of the committee on import duties of 1840, often rightly called the charter of free trade, and of which Peel, not much to his credit, had at this moment not read a word,[2] laid the foundations of the great policy of tariff reform with which the names of Peel and Gladstone are associated in history. The policy advocated in 1830 in the admirable treatise of Sir Henry Parnell is exactly the policy of Peel in 1842, as he acknowledged. After all it is an idle quarrel between the closet strategist and the victorious commander; between the man who first discerns some great truth of government, and the man who gets the thing, or even a part of the thing, actually done.

Mr. Gladstone has left on record some particulars of his own share as subordinate minister not in the cabinet, in this

[1] Parker, ii. pp. 499, 529, 533.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 509. Before the end of the session (Aug. 10, 1842) he had learned enough to do more justice to Hume and the committee.

BOOK II. 1842.

first invasion upon the old tory corn law of 1827. Peel from the beginning appreciated the powers of his keen and zealous lieutenant, and even in the autumn of 1841 he had taken him into confidential counsel.[1] Besides a letter of observations on the general scheme of commercial freedom, Mr. Gladstone prepared for the prime minister a special paper on the corn laws.

The ordinary business of the department soon fell into my hands to transact with the secretaries, one of them Macgregor, a loose-minded free trader, and the other Lefevre, a clear and scientific one. In that autumn I became possessed with the desire to relax the corn law, which formed, I believe, the chief subject of my meditations. Hence followed an important consequence. Very slow in acquiring relative and secondary knowledge and honestly absorbed in my work, I simply thought on and on as to what was right and fair under the circumstances.

In January 1842, as the session approached, they came to close quarters. The details of all the mysteries of protectionist iniquity we may well spare ourselves. Peel, feeling the pulse of his agricultural folk, thought it would never do to give them less than a ten-shilling duty, when the price of wheat was at sixty-two shillings the quarter; while Mr. Gladstone thought a twelve-shilling duty at a price of sixty far too low a relief to the consumer. His eyes were beginning to be opened.

*Feb.* 2. — I placed in Sir R. Peel's hands a long paper on the corn law in the month of November, which, on wishing to refer to it, he could not find; and he requested me to write out afresh my argument upon the value of a rest or dead level, and the part of the scale of price at which it should arrive; this I did.

On Monday I wrote another paper arguing for a rest between 60/ and 70/ or thereabouts; and yesterday a third intended to show that the present law has been in practice *fully* equivalent to a prohibition up to 70/. Lord Ripon then told me the cabinet had adopted Peel's scale as it originally stood — and seemed to

[1] The editor of Sir Robert Peel's papers was allowed to print three or four of Mr. Gladstone's letters to his chief at this interesting date. The reader will find the correspondence in Parker, ii. pp. 497–517, 519, 520.

doubt whether *any* alteration could be made. On his announcing the adoption, I said in a marked manner, '*I am very sorry for it*' — believing that it would be virtual prohibition up to 65/ or 66/ and often beyond, to the minimum; and not being able, in spite of all the good which the government is about to do with respect to commerce, to make up my mind to support such a protection. I see, from conversations with them to-day, that Lord Ripon, Peel, and Graham, are all aware the protection is greater than is necessary.

This mood soon carried the vice-president terribly far. On Feb. 5 he met most of the members of the cabinet at Peel's house. He argued his point that the scale would operate as virtual protection up to seventy shillings, and in a private interview with Peel afterwards hinted at retirement. Peel declared himself so taken by surprise that he hardly knew what to say; 'he was thunderstruck;' and he told his young colleague that 'the retirement of a person holding his office, on this question, immediately before his introducing it, would endanger the existence of the administration, and that he much doubted whether in such a case he could bring it on.'

I fear Peel was much annoyed and displeased, for he would not give me a word of help or of favourable supposition as to my own motives and belief. He used nothing like an angry or unkind word, but the negative character of the conversation had a chilling effect on my mind. I came home sick at heart in the evening and told all to Catherine, my lips being to every one else, as I said to Sir R. Peel, absolutely sealed.

'He might have gained me more easily, I think,' Mr. Gladstone wrote years afterwards, 'by a more open and supple method of expostulation. But he was not skilful, I think, in the management of personal or sectional dilemmas, as he showed later on with respect to two important questions, the Factory acts and the crisis on the sugar duties in 1844.' This sharp and unnecessary corner safely turned, Mr. Gladstone learned the lesson how to admire a great master overcoming a legislator's difficulties.

BOOK II. 1842.

I have been much struck (he wrote, Feb. 26) throughout the private discussions connected with the new project of a corn law, by the tenacity with which Sir Robert Peel, firstly by adhering in every point to the old arrangements where it seemed at all possible, and since the announcement of the plan to parliament, by steadily resisting changes in any part of the resolutions, has narrowed the ground and reduced in number the points of attack, and thus made his measure practicable in the face of popular excitement and a strong opposition. Until we were actually in the midst of the struggle, I did not appreciate the extraordinary sagacity of his parliamentary instinct in this particular. He said yesterday to Lord Ripon and to me, 'Among ourselves, in this room, I have no hesitation in saying, that if I had not had to look to other than abstract considerations, I would have proposed a lower protection. But it would have done no good to push the matter so far as to drive Knatchbull out of the cabinet after the Duke of Buckingham, nor could I hope to pass a measure with greater reductions through the House of Lords.'

When Lord John Russell proposed an amendment substituting an eight-shilling duty for a sliding scale, Peel asked Mr. Gladstone to reply to him. 'This I did (Feb. 14, 1842),' he says, 'and with my whole heart, for I did not yet fully understand the vicious operation of the sliding scale on the corn trade, and it is hard to see how an eight-shilling duty could even then have been maintained.'

III

The three centres of operations were the corn bill, then the bill imposing the income-tax, and finally the reform of the duties upon seven hundred and fifty out of the twelve hundred articles that swelled the tariff. The corn bill was the most delicate, the tariff the most laborious, the income-tax the boldest, the most fraught alike with peril for the hour and with consequences of pith and moment for the future. It is hardly possible for us to realise the general horror in which this hated impost was then enveloped. The fact of Brougham procuring the destruction of all the public books and papers in which its odious accounts were recorded,

only illustrates the intensity of the common sentiment against the dire hydra evoked by Mr. Pitt for the destruction of the regicide power of France, and sent back again to its gruesome limbo after the ruin of Napoleon. From 1842 until 1874 the question of the income-tax was the vexing enigma of public finance.

It was upon Mr. Gladstone that the burden of the immense achievement of the new tariff fell, and the toil was huge. He used afterwards to say that he had been concerned in four revisions of the tariff, in 1842, 1845, 1853, and 1860, and that the first of them cost six times as much trouble as the other three put together. He spoke one hundred and twenty-nine times during the session. He had only once sat on a committee of trade, and had only once spoken on a purely trade question during the nine years of his parliamentary life. All his habits of thought and action had been cast in a different mould. It is ordinarily assumed that he was a born financier, endowed besides with a gift of idealism and the fine training of a scholar. As matter of fact, it was the other way; he was a man of high practical and moral imagination, with an understanding made accurate by strength of grasp and incomparable power of rapid and concentrated apprehension, yoked to finance only by force of circumstance — a man who would have made a shining and effective figure in whatever path of great public affairs, whether ecclesiastical or secular, duty might have called for his exertions.

It is curious that the first measure of commercial policy in this session should have been a measure of protection in the shape of a bill introduced by the board of trade, imposing a duty on corn, wheat, and flour brought from the United States into Canada.[1] But this was only a detail, though a singular one, in a policy that was in fact a continuance of the relaxation of the commercial system of the colonies which had been begun in 1822 and 1825 by Robinson and Huskisson. In his present employment

[1] In 1843 a bill was passed lowering the duty on Canadian corn imported into England, and Mr. Gladstone says in a memo. of 1851: 'In 1843 I pleaded strongly for the admission of all the colonies to the privilege then granted to Canada.'

BOOK II. 1842.

Mr. Gladstone was called upon to handle a mass of questions that were both of extreme complexity in themselves, and also involved collision with trade interests always easily alarmed, irritated, and even exasperated. With merchants and manufacturers, importers and exporters, brokers and bankers, with all the serried hosts of British trade, with the laws and circumstances of international commerce, he was every day brought into close, detailed, and responsible contact: — Whether the duty on straw bonnets should go by weight or by number; what was the difference between boot-fronts at six shillings per dozen pairs and a 15 per cent. duty *ad valorem;* how to distinguish the regulus of tin from mere ore, and how to fix the duty on copper ore so as not to injure the smelter; how to find an adjustment between the liquorice manufacturers of London and the liquorice growers of Pontefract; what was the special case for muscatels as distinct from other raisins; whether 110 pounds of ship biscuits would be a fair deposit for taking out of bond 100 pounds of wheat if not kiln-dried, or 96 pounds if kiln-dried; whether there ought to be uniformity between hides and skins. He applies to Cornewall Lewis, then a poor-law commissioner, not on the astronomy of the ancients or the truth of early Roman history, but to find out for a certain series of years past the contract price of meat in workhouses. He listens to the grievances of the lath-renders; of the coopers who complain that casks will come in too cheap; of the coal-whippers, and the frame-work knitters; and he examines the hard predicament of the sawyers, who hold government answerable both for the fatal competition of machinery and the displacement of wood by iron. 'These deputations,' he says, 'were invaluable to me, for by constant close questioning I learned the nature of their trades, and armed with this admission to their interior, made careful notes and became able to defend in debate the propositions of the tariff and to show that the respective businesses would be carried on and not ruined as they said. I have ever since said that deputations are most admirable aids for the transaction of public business, provided the receiver of them is allowed to fix the occasion and the stage at which they appear.'

Among the deputations of this period Mr. Gladstone always recalled one from Lancashire, as the occasion on which he first saw Mr. Bright: —

The deputation was received not by me but by Lord Ripon, in the large room at the board of trade, I being present. A long line of fifteen or twenty gentlemen occupied benches running down and at the end of the room, and presented a formidable appearance. All that I remember, however, is the figure of a person in black or dark Quaker costume, seemingly the youngest of the band. Eagerly he sat a little forward on the bench and intervened in the discussion. I was greatly struck with him. He seemed to me rather fierce, but very strong and very earnest. I need hardly say this was John Bright. A year or two after he made his appearance in parliament.[1]

The best testimony to Mr. Gladstone's share in this arduous task is supplied in a letter written by the prime minister himself to John Gladstone, and that he should have taken the trouble to write it shows, moreover, that though Peel may have been a 'bad horse to go up to in the stable,' his reserve easily melted away in recognition of difficult duty well done: —

*Sir Robert Peel to John Gladstone.*

*Whitehall, June* 16, 1842. — You probably have heard that we have concluded the discussions (the preliminary discussions at least) on the subject of the tariff. I cannot resist the temptation, if it be only for the satisfaction of my own feelings, of congratulating you most warmly and sincerely, on the distinction which your son has acquired, by the manner in which he has conducted himself throughout those discussions and all others since his appointment to office. At no time in the annals of parliament has there been exhibited a more admirable combination of ability, extensive knowledge, temper, and discretion. Your paternal feelings must be gratified in the highest degree by the success which has naturally and justly followed the intellectual exertions of your son, and you must be supremely happy as a father in the reflection

[1] Bright was elected for Durham in July 1843.

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1843.

that the capacity to make such exertions is combined in his case with such purity of heart and integrity of conduct.

More than fifty years later in offering to a severe opponent magnanimous congratulations in debate on his son's successful maiden speech, Mr. Gladstone said he knew how refreshing to a father's heart such good promise must ever be. And in his own instance Peel's generous and considerate letter naturally drew from John Gladstone a worthy and feeling response : —

*John Gladstone to Sir R. Peel.*

*June* 17. — The receipt last evening of your kind letter of yesterday filled my eyes with tears of gratitude to Almighty God, for having given me a son whose conduct in the discharge of his public duties has received the full approbation of one, who of all men, is so well qualified to form a correct judgment of his merits. Permit me to offer you my most sincere thanks for this truly acceptable testimonial, which I shall carefully preserve. William is the youngest of my four sons ; in the conduct of all of them, I have the greatest cause for thankfulness, for neither have ever caused me a pang. He excels his brothers in talent, but not so in soundness of principles, habits of usefulness, or integrity of purpose. My eldest, as you are aware, has again, and in a most satisfactory manner, got into parliament. To have the third also again there, whilst the services of naval men, circumstanced as he is, who seek unsuccessfully for employment, are not required, we are desirous to effect, and wait for a favourable opportunity to accomplish. Whenever we may succeed, I shall consider my cup to be filled, for the second is honourably and usefully engaged as a merchant in Liverpool, occupying the situation I held there for so many years.

It was while they were in office that Peel wrote from Windsor to beg Mr. Gladstone to sit for his portrait to Lucas, the same artist who had already painted Graham for him. 'I shall be very glad of this addition to the gallery of the eminent men of my own time.'

It was evident that Mr. Gladstone's admission to the cabinet could not be long deferred, and in the spring of the

following year, the head of the government made him the coveted communication: —

*Whitehall, May* 13, 1843.

My dear Gladstone, — I have proposed to the Queen that Lord Ripon should succeed my lamented friend and colleague, Lord Fitzgerald, as president of the board of control. I, at the same time, requested her Majesty's permission (and it was most readily conceded) to propose to you the office of president of the board of trade, with a seat in the cabinet. If it were not for the occasion of the vacancy I should have had unmixed satisfaction in thus availing myself of the earliest opportunity that has occurred since the formation of the government, of giving a wider scope to your ability to render public service, and of strengthening that government by inviting your aid as a minister of the crown. For myself personally, and I can answer also for every other member of the government, the prospect of your accession to the cabinet is very gratifying to our feelings. — Believe me, my dear Gladstone, with sincere esteem and regard, most truly yours,

Robert Peel.

At two to-day (May 13), Mr. Gladstone records, I went to Sir R. Peel's on the subject of his letter. I began by thanking him for the indulgent manner in which he had excused my errors, and more than appreciated any services I might have rendered, and for the offer he had made and the manner of it. I said that I went to the board of trade without knowledge or relish, but had been very happy there; found quite enough to occupy my mind, enough responsibility for my own strength, and had no desire to move onwards, but should be perfectly satisfied with any arrangement which he might make as to Lord Ripon's successor. He spoke most warmly of service received, said he could not be governed by any personal considerations, and this which he proposed was obviously the right arrangement. I then stated the substance of what I had put in my memorandum, first on the opium question, to which his answer was, that the immediate power and responsibility lay with the East India Company; he did not express agreement with my view of the cultivation of the drug, but said it was a minor subject as compared with other imperial interests constantly brought under discussion;

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intimated that the Duke of Wellington had surrendered his opinion (I think) upon the boundary question; and he referred to the change in his own views, and said that in future he questioned whether he could undertake the defence of the corn laws on principle. His words were addressed to a sympathising hearer. My speeches in the House had already excited dissatisfaction if not dismay.

Then came something about the preservation of the two bishoprics in North Wales.[1] To Mr. Gladstone's surprise, Peel reckoned this a more serious matter, as it involved a practical course. After much had been said on the topic, Mr. Gladstone asked for a day or two to consider the question. 'I have to consider with God's help by Monday whether to enter the cabinet or to retire altogether: at least such is probably the second alternative.' He wished to consult Hope and Manning, and they, upon discussion, urged that the point was too narrow on which to join issue with the government. This brought him round. 'I well remember,' he says of this early case of compromise, 'that I pleaded against them that I should be viewed as a traitor, and they observed to me in reply that I must be prepared for that if necessary, that (and indeed I now feel) in these times the very wisest and most effective servants of any cause must necessarily fall so far short of the popular sentiment of its friends, as to be liable constantly to incur mistrust and even abuse. But patience and the power of character overcome all these difficulties. I am certain that Hope and Manning in 1843 were not my tempters but rather my good angels.'[2]

Peel had been in parliament as long, and almost as long in office, as Mr. Gladstone had lived, but experience of public life enlarges the man of high mind, and Peel, while perhaps he wondered at his junior's bad sense of proportion,

[1] The question of the Welsh bishoprics was one of a certain magnitude in its day. The union of Bangor and St. Asaph had been provided for by parliament in 1836, with a view to form a new see at Manchester. The measure was passed with the general assent of the episcopal bench and the church at large. But sentiment soon changed, and a hostile cry was raised before the death of the Bishop of St. Asaph, when its provisions would come into force. On his death in 1846 the whig ministry gave way and the sees remained separate.

[2] Mr. Gladstone to Lord Lyttelton, Dec. 30, 1845.

was the last man to laugh at force of sincerity and conscience. Men of the other sort, as he knew, were always to be had for the asking. 'He spoke again of the satisfaction of his colleagues, and even said he did not recollect former instances of a single vacancy in a cabinet, on which there was an entire concurrence. I repeated what I had said of his and their most indulgent judgment and took occasion distinctly to apologise for my blunder, and the consequent embarrassment which I caused to him in Feb. 1842, on the corn scale.'[1]

His parliamentary success had been extraordinary. From the first his gifts of reasoning and eloquence had pleased the House; his union of sincerity and force had attracted it as sincerity and force never fail to do; and his industry and acuteness, his steady growth in political stature, substance, and acquisition, had gained for him the confidence of the austerest of leaders. He had reached a seat in the cabinet before he was thirty-four, and after little more than ten years of parliamentary life. Canning was thirty-seven before he won the same eminence, and he had been thirteen years in the House; while Peel had the cabinet within reach when he was four-and-thirty, and had been in the House almost thirteen years, of which six had been passed in the arduous post of Irish secretary. Mr. Gladstone had shown that he had in him the qualities that make a minister and a speaker of the first class, though he had shown also the perilous quality of a spirit of minute scruple. He had not yet displayed those formidable powers of contention and attack, that were before long to resemble some tremendous projectile, describing a path the law of whose curves and deviations, as they watched its journey through the air in wonder and anxiety for the shattering impact, men found it impossible to calculate.

Mr. Gladstone's brief notes of his first and second cabinets are worth transcribing: the judicious reader will have little difficulty in guessing the topic for deliberation; it figured in the latest of his cabinets as in the earliest, as well as in most of those that intervened. '*May* 15. — My first cabinet. On Irish repeal meetings. No fear of breach of the peace,

[1] See above, p. 253.

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grounded on reasons. Therefore no case for interference. (The duke, however, was for issuing a proclamation.) *May* 20. — Second [cabinet] Repeal. Constabulary tainted.' It would be safe to say of any half dozen consecutive meetings of the Queen's servants, taken at random during the reign, that Ireland would be certain to crop up. Still, protection was the burning question. From one cause or another, said Mr. Gladstone looking back to these times, 'my reputation among the conservatives on the question of protection oozed away with rapidity. It died with the year 1842, and early in 1843 a duke, I think the Duke of Richmond, speaking in the House of Lords, described some renegade proceeding as a proceeding conducted under the banner of the vice-president of the board of trade.' He was not always as careful as Peel, and sometimes came near to a scrape.

In my speech on Lord Howick's motion (Mar. 10, 1843) I was supposed to play with the question, and prepare the way for a departure from the corn law of last year, and I am sensible that I so far lost my head, as not to put well together the various, and, if taken separately, conflicting considerations which affect the question. . . . It so happens that I spoke under the influence of a new and most sincere conviction, having reference to the recent circumstances of commercial legislation abroad, to the effect that it would not be wise to displace British labour for the sake of cheap corn, without the counteracting and sustaining provisions which exchange, not distorted by tariffs all but prohibitory, would supply. . . . This, it is clear, is a slippery position for a man who does not think firmly in the midst of ambiguous and adverse cheering, and I did my work most imperfectly, but I do think honestly. Sir R. Peel's manner, by negative signs, showed that he thought either my ground insecure or my expressions dangerous.

The situation was essentially artificial. There was little secret of the surrender of protection as a principle. In introducing the proposals for the reform of the customs tariff, Peel made the gentlemen around him shiver by openly declaring that on the general principle of free trade there

was no difference of opinion; that all agreed in the rule that we should buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest; that even if the foreigner were foolish enough not to follow suit, it was still for the interest of this country to buy as cheap as we could, whether other countries will buy from us or no.[1] Even important cabinet colleagues found this too strong doctrine for them.

'On Tuesday night,' says Mr. Gladstone, 'Peel opened the tariff anew, and laid down, in a manner which drew great cheering from the opposition, the doctrine of purchasing in the cheapest market. Stanley said to me afterwards, "Peel laid that down a great deal too broadly." Last night he (Lord S.) sat down angry with himself, and turned to me and said, "It does not signify, I *cannot* speak on these subjects; I quite lost my head." I merely answered that no one but himself would have discovered it.' Yet it was able men, apt to lose their heads in economics, whom Peel had to carry along with him. 'On another night,' says Mr. Gladstone, 'I thought Sir R. Peel appeared in an attitude of conspicuous intellectual greatness, and on comparing notes next day with Sir J. Graham at the palace, I found he was similarly impressed. Sheil delivered a very effective rhetorical speech. Lord Stanley had taken a few notes and was to follow him. Sheil was winding up just as the clock touched twelve. Lord Stanley said to Peel, "It is twelve, shall I follow him? I think not." Peel said, "I do not think it will do to let this go unanswered." He had been quite without the idea of speaking that night. Sheil sat down, and peals of cheering followed. Stanley seemed to hesitate a good deal, and at last said, as it were to himself, "No, I won't, it 's too late." In the meantime the adjournment had been moved; but when Peel saw there was no one in the breach, he rose. The cheers were still, a little spitefully, prolonged from the other side. He had an immense subject, a disturbed House, a successful speech, an entire absence of notice to contend against; but he began with power, gathered power as he went on, handled every point in his usual mode of balanced thought and language,

[1] *Hansard*, May 10, 1842.

BOOK II. 1843.

and was evidently conscious at the close, of what no one could deny, that he had made a deep impression on the House.'

IV

Mr. Gladstone kept pretty closely in step with his leader. From Sir Robert he slowly learned lessons of circumspection that may not seem congenial to his temperament, though for that matter we should remember all through that his temperament was double. He was of opinion, as he told the House of Commons, that a sliding-scale, a fixed duty, and free trade were all three open to serious objection. He regarded the defects of the existing law as greatly exaggerated, and he refused to admit that the defects of the law, whatever they might be, were fatal to every law with a sliding-scale. He wished to relieve the consumer, to steady the trade, to augment foreign commerce, and the demand for labour connected with commerce. On the other hand he desired to keep clear of the countervailing evils of disturbing either vast capitals invested in land, or the immense masses of labour employed in agriculture.[1] He noted with some complacency, that during the great controversy of 1846 and following years, he never saw any parliamentary speech of his own quoted in proof of the inconsistency of the Peelites. Here are a couple of entries from Lord Broughton's diary for 1844:—'*June* 17. Brougham said "Gladstone was a d——d fellow, a prig, and did much mischief to the government," alluding to his speech about keeping sugar duties. *June* 27. Gladstone made a decided agricultural protection speech, and was lauded therefor by Miles — so the rebels were returning to their allegiance.' Gladstone's arguments, somebody said, were in favour of free trade, and his parentheses were in favour of protection.

Well might the whole position be called as slippery a one as ever occurred in British politics. It was by the principles of free trade that Peel and his lieutenant justified tariff-reform; and they indirectly sapped protection in general by dwelling on the mischiefs of minor forms of

[1] *Hansard*, February 14, 1842.

protection in particular. They assured the country gentlemen that the sacred principle of a scale was as tenderly cherished in the new plan as in the old; on the other hand they could assure the leaguers and the doubters that the structure of the two scales was widely different. We cannot wonder that honest tories who stuck to the old doctrine, not always rejected even by Huskisson, that a country ought not to be dependent on foreign supply, were mystified and amazed as they listened to the two rival parties disputing to which of them belonged the credit of originating a policy that each of them had so short a time before so scornfully denounced. The only difference was the difference between yesterday and the day before yesterday. The whigs, with their fixed duty, were just as open as the conservatives with their sliding-scale to the taunts of the Manchester school, when they decorated economics by high *a priori* declaration that the free importation of corn was not a subject for the deliberations of the senate, but a natural and inalienable law of the Creator. Rapid was the conversion. Even Lord Palmerston, of all people in the world, denounced the arrogance and presumptuous folly of dealers in restrictive duties 'setting up their miserable legislation instead of the great standing laws of nature.' Mr. Disraeli, still warmly on the side of the minister, flashed upon his uneasy friends around him a reminder of the true pedigree of the dogmas of free trade. Was it not Mr. Pitt who first promulgated them in 1787, who saw that the loss of the market of the American colonies made it necessary by lowering duties to look round for new markets on the continent of Europe? And was it not Fox, Burke, Sheridan, and the minor whig luminaries, who opposed him, while not a single member of his own government in the House of Lords was willing or able to defend him? But even reminiscences of Mr. Pitt, and oracular descriptions of Lord Shelburne as the most remarkable man of his age, brought little comfort to men sincerely convinced with fear and trembling that free corn would destroy rent, close their mansions and their parks, break up their lives, and beggar the country. They remembered also one or two chapters of

BOOK II. 1843.

history nearer to their own time. They knew that Lord John had a right to revive the unforgotten contrast between Peel's rejection of so-called protestant securities in 1817 and 1825, and the total surrender of emancipation in 1829. Natural forebodings darkened their souls that protectionism would soon share the fate of protestantism, and that capitulation to Cobden was doomed to follow the old scandal of capitulation to O'Connell. They felt that there was something much more dreadful than the mere sting of a parliamentary recrimination, in the contrast between the corn bill of 1842 and Peel's panegyrics in '39, '40, and '41 on the very system which that bill now shattered. On the other side some could not forget that in 1840 the whig prime minister, the head of a party still even at the eleventh hour unregenerated by Manchester, predicted a violent struggle as the result of the Manchester policy, stirring society to its foundations, kindling bitter animosities not easy to quench, and creating convulsions as fierce as those of the Reform bill.

A situation so precarious and so unedifying was sure to lead to strange results in the relations of parties and leaders. In July 1843 the Speaker told Hobhouse that Peel had lost all following and authority; all but votes. Hobhouse meeting a tory friend told him that Sir Robert had got nothing but his majority. 'He won't have that long,' the tory replied. 'Who will make sacrifices for such a fellow? They call me a *frondeur*, but there are many such. Peel thinks he can govern by Fremantle and a little clique, but it will not do. The first election that comes, out he must go.' Melbourne, only half in jest, was reported to talk of begging Peel to give him timely notice, lest the Queen might take him by surprise. On one occasion Hobhouse wished a secondary minister to tell Sir Robert how much he admired a certain speech. 'I!' exclaimed the minister; 'he would kick me away if I dared to speak to him.' 'A man,' Hobhouse observes, 'who will not take a civil truth from a subaltern is but a sulky fellow after all; there is no true dignity or pride in such reserve.' Oddly enough, Lord John was complaining just as loudly about the same time of his own want of hold upon his party.

The tariff operations of 1842 worked no swift social miracle. General stagnation still prevailed. Capital was a drug in the market, but food was comparatively cheap.[1] Stocks were light, and there was very little false credit. In spite of all these favouring conditions, Mr. Gladstone (March 20, 1843) had to report to his chief that 'the deadness of foreign demand keeps our commerce in a state of prolonged paralysis.' Cobden had not even yet convinced them that the true way to quicken foreign demand was to open the ports to that foreign supply, with which they paid us for what they bought from us. Mr. Gladstone saw no further than the desire of making specific arrangement with other countries for reciprocal reductions of import duties.

In one of his autobiographic notes (1897) Mr. Gladstone describes the short and sharp parliamentary crisis in 1844 brought about by the question of the sugar duties, but this may perhaps be relegated to an appendix.[2]

## V

From 1841 to 1844 Mr. Gladstone's department was engaged in other matters lying beyond the main stream of effort. 'We were anxiously and eagerly endeavouring to make tariff treaties with many foreign countries. Austria, I think, may have been included, but I recollect especially France, Prussia, Portugal, and I believe Spain. And the state of our tariff, even after the law of 1842, was then such as to supply us with plenty of material for liberal offers. Notwithstanding this, we failed in every case. I doubt whether we advanced the cause of free trade by a single inch.'

The question of the prohibition against the export of machinery came before him. The custom-house authorities pronounced it ineffective, and recommended its removal. A parliamentary committee in 1841 had reported in favour of entire freedom. The machine makers, of course, were active, and the general manufacturers of the country, except-

[1] The average price of wheat per quarter in 1841 was 64 shillings, in 1842, 57 shillings, and in 1843, 50 shillings, a lower average than for any year until 1849.

[2] See Appendix.

BOOK II. 1844.

ing the Nottingham lace makers and the flax-spinners of the north of Ireland, had become neutral. Only a very limited portion of the trade was any longer subject to restriction, and Mr. Gladstone, after due consultation with superior ministers, proposed a bill for removing the prohibition altogether.[1] He also brought in a bill (April 1844) for the regulation of companies. It was when he was president of the board of trade that the first Telegraph Act was passed. 'I was well aware,' he wrote, 'of the advantage of taking them into the hands of the government, but I was engaged in a plan which contemplated the ultimate acquisition of the railways by the public, and which was much opposed by the railway companies, so that to have attempted taking the telegraphs would have been hopeless. The bill was passed, but the executive machinery two years afterwards broke down.'

Questions that do not fall within the contentions of party usually cut a meagre figure on the page of the historian, and the railway policy of this decade is one of those questions. It was settled without much careful deliberation or foresight, and may be said in the main to have shaped itself. At the time when Mr. Gladstone presided over the department of trade, an immense extension of the railway system was seen to be certain, and we may now smile at what then seemed the striking novelty of such a prospect. Mr. Gladstone proposed a select committee on the subject, guided its deliberations, drew its reports, and framed the bill that was founded upon them. He dwelt upon the favour now beginning to be shown to the new roads by the owners of land through which they were to pass, so different from the stubborn resistance that had for long been offered; upon the cheapened cost of construction; upon the growing disposition to employ redundant capital in making railways, instead of running the risks that had made foreign investment so disastrous. It was not long, indeed, before this very disposition led to a mania that was even more widely disastrous than any foreign investment had been since the days of the

[1] See Speech, Aug. 10, 1843.

South Sea bubble. Meanwhile, Mr. Gladstone's Railway Act of 1844, besides a number of working regulations for the day, laid down two principles of the widest range : reserving to the state the full right of intervention in the concerns of the railway companies, and giving to the state the option to purchase a line at the end of a certain term at twenty-five years' purchase of the divisible profits.[1]

It was during these years of labour under Peel that he first acquired principles of administrative and parliamentary practice that afterwards stood him in good stead : on no account to try to deal with a question before it is ripe ; never to go the length of submitting a difference between two departments to the prime minister before the case is exhausted and complete ; never to press a proposal forward beyond the particular stage at which it has arrived. Pure commonplaces if we will, but they are not all of them easy to learn. We cannot forget that Peel and Mr. Gladstone were in the strict line of political succession. They were alike in social origin and academic antecedents. They started from the same point of view as to the great organs of national life, the monarchy, the territorial peerage and the commons, the church, the universities. They showed the same clear knowledge that it was not by its decorative parts, or what Burke styled 'solemn plausibilities,' that the community derived its strength ; but that it rested for its real foundations on its manufactures, its commerce, and its credit. Even in the lesser things, in reading Sir Robert Peel's letters, those who in later years served under Mr. Gladstone can recognise the school to which he went for the methods, the habits of mind, the practices of business, and even the phrases which he employed when his own time came to assume the direction of public affairs, the surmounting of administrative difficulties, the piloting of complex measures, and the handling of troublesome persons.

[1] Wordsworth wrote (Oct. 15, 1844) to implore him to direct special attention to the desecrating project of a railway from Kendal to the head of Windermere, and enclosed a sonnet. The sixth line, by the way, is a variant from the version in the books : 'And must he too his old delights disown.'—Knight's *Wordsworth* (1896 edition), viii. 166.

## CHAPTER IX

### MAYNOOTH

*(1844–1845)*

> When I consider how munificently the colleges of Cambridge and Oxford are endowed, and with what pomp religion and learning are there surrounded; . . . when I remember what was the faith of Edward III. and of Henry VI., of Margaret of Anjou and Margaret of Richmond, of William of Wykeham and William of Waynefleet, of Archbishop Chichele and Cardinal Wolsey; when I remember what we have taken from the Roman catholics, King's College, New College, Christ Church, my own Trinity; and when I look at the miserable Dotheboys' Hall which we have given them in exchange, I feel, I must own, less proud than I could wish of being a protestant and a Cambridge man. — Macaulay.

BOOK II. 1844

In pursuit of the policy of conciliation with which he was now endeavouring to counter O'Connell, Peel opened to his colleagues in 1844 a plan for dealing with the sum annually voted by parliament to the seminary for the training of catholic clergy at Maynooth. The original grant was made by the Irish parliament, protestant as it was; and was accepted even by anti-catholic leaders after 1800 as virtually a portion of the legislative union with Ireland. Peel's proposal, by making an annual grant permanent, by tripling the amount, by incorporating the trustees, established a new and closer connection between the state and the college. It was one of the boldest things he ever did. What Lord Aberdeen wrote to Madame de Lieven in 1852 was hardly a whit less true in 1845: 'There is more intense bigotry in England at this moment than in any other country in Europe.' Peel said to Mr. Gladstone at the beginning of 1845 — 'I wish to speak without any reserve, and I ought to tell you, I think it will very probably be fatal to the

government.' 'He explained that he did not know whether the feeling among Goulburn's constituents [the university of Cambridge] might not be too strong for him; that in Scotland, as he expected, there would be a great opposition; and he seemed to think that from the church also there might be great resistance, and he said the proceedings in the diocese of Exeter showed a very sensitive state of the public mind.' During the whole of 1844 the project simmered. At a very early moment Mr. Gladstone grew uneasy. He did not condemn the policy in itself, but whatever else might be said, it was in direct antagonism to the principle elaborately expounded by him only six years before, as the sacred rule and obligation between a Christian state and Christian churches. He had marked any departure from that rule as a sign of social declension, as a descent from a higher state of society to a lower, as a note in the ebb and flow of national life. Was it not inevitable, then, that his official participation in the extension of the public endowment of Maynooth would henceforth give to every one the right to say of him, 'That man cannot be trusted'? He was not indeed committed, by anything that he had written, to the extravagant position that the peace of society should be hazarded because it could no longer restore its ancient theories of religion; but was he not right in holding it indispensable that any vote or further declaration from him on these matters should be given under circumstances free from all just suspicions of his disinterestedness and honesty?[1]

In view of these approaching difficulties upon Maynooth, on July 12 he made a truly singular tender to the head of the government. He knew Peel to be disposed to entertain the question of a renewal of the public relations with the papal court at Rome, first to be opened by indirect communications through the British envoy at Florence or Naples. 'What I have to say,' Mr. Gladstone now wrote to the prime minister, 'is that if you and Lord Aberdeen should think fit to appoint me to Florence or Naples, and

[1] The letters from Mr. Gladstone to Peel on this topic are given by Mr. Parker, *Peel*, iii. pp. 160, 163, 166.

BOOK II. 1844.

to employ me in any such communications as those to which I have referred, I am at your disposal.' Of this startling offer to transform himself from president of the board of trade into Vatican envoy, Mr. Gladstone left his own later judgment upon record; here it is, and no more needs to be said upon it: —

About the time of my resignation on account of the contemplated increase of the grant to the College of Maynooth, I became possessed with the idea that there was about to be a renewal in some shape of our diplomatic [relations] with the see of Rome, and I believe that I committed the gross error of tendering myself to Sir Robert Peel to fill the post of envoy. I have difficulty at this date (1894) in conceiving by what obliquity of view I could have come to imagine that this was a rational or in any way excusable proposal: and this, although I vaguely think my friend James Hope had some hand in it, seems to show me now that there existed in my mind a strong element of fanaticism. I believe that I left it to Sir R. Peel to make me any answer or none as he might think fit; and he with great propriety chose the latter alternative.

In the autumn of 1844, the prime minister understood that if he proceeded with the Maynooth increase, he would lose Mr. Gladstone. The loss, Peel said to Graham, was serious, and on every account to be regretted, but no hope of averting it would justify the abandonment of a most important part of their Irish policy. Meanwhile, in the midst of heavy labours on the tariff in preparation for the budget of 1845, Mr. Gladstone was sharply perturbed, as some of his letters to Mrs. Gladstone show: —

*Whitehall, Nov.* 22, '44. — It is much beyond my expectation that Newman should have taken my letter so kindly; it seemed to me so like the operation of a clumsy, bungling surgeon upon a sensitive part. I cannot well comment upon his meaning, for as you may easily judge, what with cabinet, board, and Oak Farm, I have enough in my head to-day — and the subject is a fine and subtle one. But I may perhaps be able to think upon it to-night, in the meantime I think yours is a very just conjectural sketch. We have not got in cabinet to-day to the really pinching part of

the discussion, the Roman catholic religious education. That comes on Monday. My mind does not waver; pray for me, that I may do right. I have an appointment with Peel to-morrow, and I rather think he means to say something to me on the question.

*Nov.* 23. — You will see that whatever turns up, I am sure to be in the wrong. An invitation to Windsor for us came this morning, and I am *sorry to say* one including Sunday — Nov. 30 to Dec. 2. I have had a long battle with Peel on the matters of my office; not another syllable. So far as it goes this tends to make me think he does not calculate on any change in me; yet on the whole I lean the other way. Manning comes up on Monday.

*Nov.* 25. — Events travel fast and not slow. My opinion is that I shall be out on Friday evening. We have discussed Maynooth to-day. An intermediate letter which Sir James Graham has to write to Ireland for information causes thus much of delay. I have told them that if I go, I shall go on the ground of what is required by my personal character, and not because my mind is *made up* that the course which they propose can be avoided, far less because I consider myself bound to resist it. I had the process of this declaration to repeat. I think they were prepared for it, but they would not assume that it was to be, and rather proceeded as if I had never said a word before upon the subject. It was painful, but not so painful as the last time, and by an effort I had altogether prevented my mind from brooding upon it beforehand. At this moment ($6\frac{1}{4}$) I am sure they are talking about it over the way. I am going to dine with Sir R. Peel. Under these circumstances the Windsor visit will be strange enough! In the meantime my father writes to me most urgently, desiring me to come to Liverpool. I *hope* for some further light from him on Wednesday morning. . . .

*Nov.* 26. — I have no more light to throw upon the matters which I mentioned yesterday. The dinner at Peel's went off as well as could be expected; I did not sit near him. Lord Aberdeen was with me to-day, and said very kindly it *must* be prevented. But I think it cannot, and friendly efforts to prolong the day only aggravate the pain. Manning was with me all this morning; he is well, and is to come back to-morrow.

BOOK II. 1845.

*Jan.* 9, '45. — Another postponement; but our explanations were as satisfactory as could possibly be made under such circumstances. The tone and manner as kind as at any time — nothing like murmur. At the same time Peel said he thought it right to intimate a belief that the government might very probably be shipwrecked upon the Maynooth question, partly in connection with my retirement, but also as he intimated from the uncertainty whether there might not be a very strong popular feeling against it. *He* takes upon himself all responsibility for any inconvenience to which the government may possibly be put from the delay and a consequent abrupt retirement, and says I have given him the fullest and fairest notice. . . . I saw Manning for two hours this morning, and let the cat out of the bag to him in part. Have a note from Lockhart saying the Bishop of London had sent his chaplain to Murray to express high approval of the article on Ward — and enclosing the vulgar addition of £63.

*Windsor Castle, Jan.* 10. — First, owing to the Spanish ambassador's not appearing, Lady Lyttelton was suddenly invited, and fell to my lot to hand in and sit by, which was very pleasant. I am, as you know, a shockingly bad witness to looks, but she appeared to me, I confess, a little worn and aged. She ought to have at least two months' holiday every year. After dinner the Queen inquired as usual about you, and rather particularly with much interest about Lady Glynne. I told her plainly all I could. This rather helped the Queen through the conversation, as it kept me talking, and she was evidently hard pressed at the gaps. Then we went to cards, and played commerce; fortunately I was never the worst hand, and so was not called upon to pay, for I had locked up my purse before going to dinner; but I found I had won 2s. 2d. at the end, 8d. of which was paid me by the Prince. I mean to keep the 2d. piece (the 6d. I cannot identify) accordingly, unless I lose it again to-night. I had rather a nice conversation with him about the international copyright convention with Prussia. . . .

*Whitehall, Jan.* 11. — I came back from Windsor this morning, very kindly used. The Queen mentioned particularly that you were not asked on account of presumed inconvenience, and sent me a private print of the Prince of Wales, and on my thanking for it through Lady Lyttelton, another of the Princess. Also she

brought the little people through the corridor yesterday after luncheon, where they behaved very well, and she made them come and shake hands with me. The Prince of Wales has a very good countenance; the baby I should call a very fine child indeed. The Queen said, After your own you must think them dwarfs; but I answered that I did not think the Princess Royal short as compared with Willy. We had more cards last evening; Lady —— made more blunders and was laughed at as usual. . . .

*Jan.* 13. — I think there will certainly be at least one cabinet more in the end of the week. My position is what would commonly be called uncomfortable. I do not know how long the Maynooth matter may be held over. I may remain a couple of months, or only a week — may go at any time at twenty-four hours' notice. I think on the whole it is an even chance whether I go before or after the meeting of parliament, so that I am unfeignedly put to obey the precept of our Lord, 'Take no thought for the morrow; the morrow will take thought for the things of itself.' I am sorry that a part of the inconvenience falls on your innocent head. I need not tell you the irksomeness of business is much increased, and one's purposes unmanned by this indefiniteness. Still, having very important matters in preparation, I must not give any signs of inattention or indifference.

*Cabinet Room, Jan.* 14. — I have no news to give you about myself, but continue to be quite in the dark. There is a certain Maynooth bill in preparation, and when that appears for decision my time will probably have come, but I am quite ignorant when it will be forthcoming. I am to be with Peel to-morrow morning, but I think on board of trade business only. Graham has just told us that the draft of the Maynooth bill will be ready on Saturday; but it cannot, I think, be *considered* before the middle of next week at the earliest.

*Jan.* 15. — The nerves are a little unruly on a day like this between (official) life and death; so much of feeling mixes with the more abstract question, which would be easily disposed of if it stood alone. (*Diary.*)

It was February 3 before Mr. Gladstone wrote his last note from his desk at the board of trade, thanking the prime minister for a thousand acts of kindness which he trusted

BOOK II. 1845.

himself not readily to forget. The feeling of the occasion he described to Manning: —

> Do you know that daily intercourse and co-operation with men upon matters of great anxiety and moment interweaves much of one's being with theirs, and parting with them, leaving them under the pressure of their work and setting myself free, feels, I think, much like dying: more like it than if I were turning my back altogether upon public life. I have received great kindness, and so far as personal sentiments are concerned, I believe they are as well among us as they can be.

One other incident he describes to his wife: —

> Peel thought I should ask an audience of the Queen on my retirement, and accordingly at the palace to-day (Feb. 3) he intimated, and then the lord-in-waiting, as is the usage, formally requested it. I saw the Queen in her private sitting-room. As she did not commence speaking immediately after the first bow, I thought it my part to do so; and I said, 'I have had the boldness to request an audience, madam, that I might say with how much pain it is that I find myself separated from your Majesty's service, and how gratefully I feel your Majesty's many acts of kindness.' She replied that she regretted it very much, and that it was a great loss. I resumed that I had the greatest comfort I could enjoy under the circumstances in the knowledge that my feelings towards her Majesty's person and service, and also towards Sir R. Peel and my late colleagues, were altogether unchanged by my retirement. After a few words more she spoke of the state of the country and the reduced condition of Chartism, of which I said I believed the main feeder was want of employment. At the pauses I watched her eye for the first sign to retire. But she asked me about you before we concluded. Then one bow at the spot and another at the door, which was very near, and so it was all over.
>
> *Feb.* 4. — Ruminated on the dangers of my explanation right and left, and it made me unusually nervous. H. of C. 4½–9. I was kindly spoken of and heard, and I hope attained practically purposes I had in view, but I think the House felt that the last part by taking away the sting reduced the matter to flatness.

According to what is perhaps a questionable usage, Lord John Russell invited the retiring minister to explain his secession from office to the House. In the suspicion, distraction, tension that marked that ominous hour in the history of English party, people insisted that the resignation of the head of the department of trade must be due to divergence of judgment upon protection. The prime minister, while expressing in terms of real feeling his admiration for Mr. Gladstone's character and ability, and his high regard for his colleague's private qualities, thought well to restate that the resignation came from no question of commercial policy. 'For three years,' he went on, 'I have been closely connected with Mr. Gladstone in the introduction of measures relating to the financial policy of the country, and I feel it my duty openly to avow that it seems almost impossible that two public men, acting together so long, should have had so little divergence in their opinions upon such questions.' If anybody found fault with Mr. Gladstone for not resigning earlier, the prime minister was himself responsible: 'I was unwilling to lose until the latest moment the advantages I derived from one whom I consider capable of the highest and most eminent services.'[1]

[1] In the course of May, 1845, Peel made some remarks on resignations, of which Mr. Gladstone thought the report worth preserving: — 'I admit that there may be many occasions when it would be the duty of a public man to retire from office, rather than propose measures which are contrary to the principles he has heretofore supported. I think that the propriety of his taking that course will mainly depend upon the effect which his retirement will have upon the success of that public measure, which he believes to be necessary for the good of his country. I think it was perfectly honourable, perfectly just, in my right honourable friend the late president of the board of trade to relinquish office. The hon. gentleman thinks I ought to have pursued the same course in 1829. That was precisely the course I wished to pursue — it was precisely the course which I intended to pursue. Until within a month of the period when I consented to bring forward the measure for the relief of the Roman catholics, I did contemplate retiring from office — not because I shrank from the responsibility of proposing that measure — not from the fear of being charged with inconsistency — not because I was not prepared to make the painful sacrifice of private friendships and political connections, but because I believed that my retirement from office would promote the success of the measure. I thought that I should more efficiently assist my noble friend in carrying that measure if I retired from office, and gave the measure my cordial support in a private capacity. I changed my opinion when it was demonstrated to me that there was a necessity for sacrificing my own feelings by retaining office — when it was shown to me that, however humble my abilities, yet, considering the station which I occupied, my retiring from office would render the carrying of that

BOOK II. 1845.

The point of Mr. Gladstone's reply was in fact an extremely simple and a highly honourable one. While carefully abstaining from laying down any theory of political affairs as under all circumstances inflexible and immutable, yet he thought that one who had borne such solemn testimony as he had borne in his book, to a particular view of a great question, ought not to make himself responsible for a material departure from it, without at least placing himself openly in a position to form a judgment that should be beyond all mistake at once independent and unsuspected. That position in respect of the Maynooth policy he could not hold, so long as he was a member of the cabinet proposing it, and therefore he had resigned, though it was understood that he would not resist the Maynooth increase itself. All this, I fancy, might easily have been made plain even to those who thought his action a display of overstrained moral delicacy. As it was, his anxiety to explore every nook and cranny of his case, and to defend or discover in it every point that human ingenuity could devise for attack, led him to speak for more than an hour; at the end of which even friendly and sympathetic listeners were left wholly at a loss for a clue to the labyrinth. 'What a marvellous talent is this,' Cobden exclaimed to a friend sitting near him; 'here have I been sitting listening with pleasure for an hour to his explanation, and yet I know no more why he left the government than before he began.' 'I could not but know,' Mr. Gladstone wrote on this incident long years after, 'that I should inevitably be regarded as fastidious and fanciful, fitter for a dreamer or possibly a schoolman, than for the active purposes of public life in a busy and moving age.'[1]

Sir Robert Inglis begged him to lead the opposition to the bill. In the course of the conversation Inglis went back

measure totally impossible — when it was proved to me that there were objections in the highest quarters which would not be overcome unless I was prepared to sacrifice much that was dear to me — when it was intimated to my noble friend that there was an intention on the part of the highest authorities in the church of England to offer a decided opposition to the measure, and when my noble friend intimated to me that he thought, if I persevered in my intention to retire, success was out of the question. It was then I did not hesitate to say that I would not expose others to obloquy or suspicions from which I myself shrunk.'

[1] *Gleanings*, vii. p. 118.

to the fatal character and consequences of the Act of 1829; and wished that his advice had then been taken, which was that the Duke of Cumberland should be sent as lord lieutenant to Ireland with thirty thousand men. 'As that good and very kind man spoke the words,' Mr. Gladstone says, 'my blood ran cold, and he too had helped me onwards in the path before me.' William Palmer wrote that the grant to Maynooth was the sin of 1829 over again, and would bring with it the same destruction of the conservative party. Lord Winchilsea, one of his patrons at Newark, protested against anything that savoured of the national endowment of Romanism. Mr. Disraeli was reported as saying that with his resignation on Maynooth Mr. Gladstone's career was over.

The rough verdict pronounced his act a piece of political prudery. One journalistic wag observed, 'A lady's footman jumped off the Great Western train, going forty miles an hour, merely to pick up his hat. Pretty much like this act, so disproportional to the occasion, is Mr. Gladstone's leap out of the ministry to follow his book.' When the time came he voted for the second reading of the Maynooth bill (April 11) with remarkable emphasis. 'I am prepared, in opposition to what I believe to be the prevailing opinion of the people of England and of Scotland, in opposition to the judgment of my own constituents, from whom I greatly regret to differ, and in opposition to my own deeply cherished predilections, to give a deliberate and even anxious support to the measure.'

The 'dreamer and the schoolman' meanwhile had left behind him a towering monument of hard and strenuous labour in the shape of that second and greater reform of the tariff, in which, besides the removal of the export duty on coal and less serious commodities, no fewer than four hundred and thirty articles were swept altogether away from the list of the customs officer. Glass was freed from an excise amounting to twice or thrice the value of the article, and the whole figure of remission was nearly three times as large as the corresponding figure in the bold operations of 1842. Whether the budget of 1842 or that

BOOK II. 1845.

of 1845 marked the more extensive advance, we need not discuss; it is enough that Mr. Gladstone himself set down the construction of these two tariffs among the principal achievements in the history of his legislative works. His unofficial relations with the colleagues whom he had left were perfectly unchanged. 'You will be glad to know,' he writes to his father, 'that the best feeling, as I believe, subsists between us. Although our powers of entertaining guests are not of the first order, yet with a view partly to these occurrences we asked Sir R. and Lady Peel to dinner to-day, and also Lord and Lady Stanley and Lord Aberdeen. All accepted, but unfortunately an invitation to Windsor has carried off Sir R. and Lady Peel. A small matter, but I mention it as a symbol of what is material.'

Before many days were over, he was working day and night on a projected statement, involving much sifting and preparation, upon the recent commercial legislation. Lord John Russell had expressed a desire for a competent commentary on the results of the fiscal changes of 1842, and the pamphlet in which Mr. Gladstone showed what those results had been was the reply. Three editions of it were published within the year.[1]

This was not the only service that Mr. Gladstone had an opportunity of rendering in the course of the session to the government that he had quitted. 'Peel,' he says, 'had a plan for the admission of free labour sugar on terms of favour. Lord Palmerston made a motion to show that this involved a breach of our old treaties with Spain. I examined the case laboriously, and, though I think his facts could not be denied, I undertook (myself out of office) to answer him on behalf of the government. This I did, and Peel, who was the most conscientious man I ever knew in spareness of eulogium, said to me when I sat down, "That was a wonderful speech, Gladstone."' The speech took four hours, and was, I think, the last that he made in parliament

[1] 'Remarks upon recent Commercial Legislation suggested by the expository statement of the Revenue from Customs, and other Papers lately submitted to Parliament, by the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, M. P. for Newark.' London, Murray, 1845. Mr. Gladstone had written on the same subject in the *Foreign and Colonial Quarterly Review*, January 1843.

for two years and a half, for reasons that we shall presently discover.

In the autumn of 1845, Mr. Gladstone made a proposal to Hope-Scott. 'As Ireland,' he said, 'is likely to find this country and parliament so much employment for years to come, I feel rather oppressively an obligation to try and see it with my own eyes instead of using those of other people, according to the limited measure of my means.' He suggested that they should devote some time 'to a working tour in Ireland, eschewing all grandeur and taking little account of scenery, compared with the purpose of looking at close quarters at the institutions for religion and education of the country and at the character of the people.' Philip Pusey was inclined to join them. 'It will not alarm you,' says Pusey, 'if I state my belief that in these agrarian outrages the Irish peasants have been engaged in a justifiable civil war, because the peasant ejected from his land could no longer by any efforts of his own preserve his family from the risk of starvation. This view is that of a very calm utilitarian, George Lewis.'[1] They were to start from Cork and the south and work their way round by the west, carrying with them Lewis's book, blue books, and a volume or two of Plato, Æschylus, and the rest. The expedition was put off by Pusey's discovery that the *Times* was despatching a correspondent to carry on agrarian investigations. Mr. Gladstone urged that the Irish land question was large enough for two, and so indeed it swiftly proved, for Ireland was now on the edge of the black abysses of the famine.

[1] See his memorable work on Irish Disturbances, published in 1836.

# CHAPTER X

## TRIUMPH OF POLICY AND FALL OF THE MINISTER

*(1846)*

CHANGE of opinion, in those to whose judgment the public looks more or less to assist its own, is an evil to the country, although a much smaller evil than their persistence in a course which they know to be wrong. It is not always to be blamed. But it is always to be watched with vigilance; always to be challenged and put upon its trial. — GLADSTONE.

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NOT lingering for the moment on Mr. Gladstone's varied pre-occupations during 1845, and not telling over again the well-known story of the circumstances that led to the repeal of the corn law, I pass rapidly to Mr. Gladstone's part — it was a secondary part — in the closing act of the exciting political drama on which the curtain had risen in 1841. The end of the session of 1845 had left the government in appearance even stronger than it was in the beginning of 1842. Two of the most sagacious actors knew better what this was worth. Disraeli was aware how the ties had been loosened between the minister and his supporters, and Cobden was aware that, in words used at the time, 'three weeks of rain when the wheat was ripening would rain away the corn law.'[1]

Everybody knows how the rain came, and alarming signs of a dreadful famine in Ireland came; how Peel advised his cabinet to open the ports for a limited period, but without promising them that if the corn duties were ever taken off, they could ever be put on again; how Lord John seized the moment, wrote an Edinburgh letter, and declared for total and immediate repeal; how the minister once

[1] Perhaps I may refer to my *Life of Cobden*, which had the great advantage of being read before publication by Mr. Bright. Chapters xiv. and xv.

more called his cabinet together, invited them to support him in settling the question, and as they would not all assent, resigned; how Lord John tried to form a government and failed; and how Sir Robert again became first minister of the crown, but not bringing all his colleagues back with him. 'I think,' said Mr. Gladstone in later days, 'he expected to carry the repeal of the corn law without breaking up his party, but meant at all hazard to carry it.'

Peel's conduct in 1846, Lord Aberdeen said to a friend ten years later, was very noble. With the exception of Graham and myself, his whole cabinet was against him. Lyndhurst, Goulburn, and Stanley were almost violent in their resistance. Still more opposed to him, if it were possible, was the Duke of Wellington. To break up the cabinet was an act of great courage. To resume office when Lord John had failed in constructing one, was still more courageous. He said to the Queen: 'I am ready to kiss hands as your minister to-night. I believe I can collect a ministry which will last long enough to carry free trade, and I am ready to make the attempt.' When he said this there were only two men on whom he could rely. One of the first to join him was Wellington. 'The Queen's government,' he said, 'must be carried on. We have done all that we could for the landed interest. Now we must do all that we can for the Queen.'[1]

On one of the days of this startling December, Mr. Gladstone writes to his father: 'If Peel determines to form a government, and if he sends for me (a compound uncertainty), I cannot judge what to do until I know much more than at present of the Irish case. It is there if anywhere that he must find his justification; there if anywhere that one returned to parliament as I am, can honestly find reason for departing at this time from the present corn law.' Two other letters of Mr. Gladstone's show us more fully why he followed Peel instead of joining the dissentients, of whom the most important was Lord Stanley. The first of these was written to his father four and a half years later: —

6 *Carlton Gardens, June* 30, 1849. — As respects my 'having

[1] Lord Aberdeen to Senior, Sept. 1856. Mrs. Simpson's *Many Memories*, p. 233.

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made Peel a free trader,' I have never seen that idea expressed anywhere, and I think it is one that does great injustice to the character and power of his mind. In every case, however, the head of a government may be influenced more or less in the affairs of each department of state by the person in charge of that department. If, then, there was any influence at all upon Peel's mind proceeding from me between 1841 and 1845, I have no doubt it may have tended on the whole towards free trade. . . . But all this ceased with the measures of 1845, when I left office. It was during the alarm of a potato famine in the autumn of that year that the movement in the government about the corn laws began. I was then on the continent, looking after Helen [his sister], and not dreaming of office or public affairs. . . . I myself had invariably, during Peel's government, spoken of protection not as a thing good in principle, but to be dealt with as tenderly and cautiously as might be according to circumstances, always moving in the direction of free trade. It *then* appeared to me that the case was materially altered by events; it was no longer open to me to pursue that cautious course. A great struggle was imminent, in which it was plain that two parties only could really find place, on the one side for repeal, on the other side for *permanent* maintenance of a corn law and a protective system generally and on principle. It would have been more inconsistent in me, even if consistency had been the rule, to join the latter party than the former. But independently of that, I thought, and still think, that the circumstances of the case justified and required the change. So far as relates to the final change in the corn law, you will see that no influence proceeded from me, but rather that events over which I had no control, and steps taken by Sir R. Peel while I was out of the government, had an influence upon me in inducing me to take office. I noticed some days ago that you had made an observation on this subject, but I did not recollect that it was a question. Had I adverted to this I should have answered it at once. If I had any motive for avoiding the subject, it was, I think, this — that it is not easy to discuss such a question as that of an influence of mine over a mind so immeasurably superior, without something of egotism and vanity.

So much for the general situation. The second letter is to Mrs. Gladstone, and contributes some personal details:—

13 *Carlton House Terrace, Dec.* 22, 6 P.M., 1845. — It is offensive to begin about myself, but I must. Within the last two hours I have accepted the office of secretary for the colonies, succeeding Lord Stanley, who resigns. The last twenty-four have been very anxious hours. Yesterday afternoon (two hours after Holy Communion) Lincoln came to make an appointment on Peel's part. I went to meet him in Lincoln's house at five o'clock. He detailed to me the circumstances connected with the late political changes, asked me for no reply, and gave me quantities of papers to read, including letters of his own, the Queen's, and Lord J. Russell's, during the crisis. This morning I had a conversation with Bonham [the party whipper-in] upon the general merits, but without telling him precisely what the proposal made to me was. Upon the whole my mind, though I felt the weight of the question, was clear. I had to decide what was best to be done *now*. I arrived speedily at the conviction that *now*, at any rate, it is best that the question should be finally settled; that Peel ought and is bound now to try it; that I ought to support it in parliament; that if, in deciding the mode, he endeavours to include the most favourable terms for the agricultural body that it is in his power to obtain, I ought not only to support it, by which I mean vote for it in parliament, but likewise not to refuse to be a party to the proposal. I found from him that he entirely recognised this view, and did feel himself bound to make the best terms that he believed attainable, while, on the other hand, I am convinced that we are now in a position that requires provision to be made for the final abolition of the corn law. Such being the state of matters, with a clear conscience, but with a heavy heart, I accepted office. He was exceedingly warm and kind. But it *was* with a heavy heart. . . . I have seen Lord Stanley. 'I am extremely glad to hear you have taken office,' said he. We go to Windsor to-morrow to a council — he to resign the seals, and I to receive them.

In the diary he enters:—

Saw Sir R. Peel at 3, and accepted office — in opposition, as I have the consolation of feeling, to my leanings and desires, and

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with the most precarious prospects. Peel was most kind, nay fatherly. We *held* hands instinctively, and I could not but reciprocate with emphasis his 'God bless you.'

I well remember, Mr. Gladstone wrote in a memorandum of Oct. 4, 1851, Peel's using language to me in the Duke of Newcastle's house on Sunday, Dec. 21, 1845, which, as I conceive, distinctly intimated his belief that he would be able to carry his measure, and at the same time hold his party together. He spoke with a kind of glee and complacency in his tone when he said, making up his meaning by signs, 'I have not lived near forty years in public life to find myself wholly without the power of foreseeing the course of events in the House of Commons' — in reference to the very point of the success of his government.

One thing is worth noting as we pass. The exact proceedings of the memorable cabinets of November and the opening days of December are still obscure. It has generally been held that Disraeli planted a rather awkward stroke when he taunted Peel with his inconsistency in declaring that he was not the proper minister to propose repeal, and yet in trying to persuade his colleagues to make the attempt before giving the whigs a chance. The following note of Mr. Gladstone's (written in 1851 after reading Sir R. Peel's original memoir on the Corn Act of 1846) throws some light on the question: —

When Sir R. Peel invited me to take office in December 1845 he did not make me aware of the offer he had made to the cabinet in his memorandum, I think of Dec. 2, to propose a new corn law with a lowered sliding duty, which should diminish annually by a shilling until in some eight or ten years the trade would be free. No doubt he felt that after Lord John Russell had made his attempt to form a government, and after, by Lord Stanley's resignation, he had lost the advantages of unanimity, he could not be justified in a proposal involving so considerable an element of protection. It has become matter of history. But as matter of history it is important to show how honestly and perseveringly he strove to hold the balance fairly between contending claims, and how far he was from being the mere puppet of abstract theories.

That is to say, what he proposed to his cabinet early in December was not the total and immediate repeal to which he was led by events before the end of the month. CHAP. X. ÆT. 37.

II

The acceptance of office vacated the seat at Newark, and Mr. Gladstone declined to offer himself again as a candidate. He had been member for Newark for thirteen years, and had been five times elected. So ended his connection with the first of the five constituencies that in his course he represented. 'I part from my constituents,' he tells his father, 'with deep regret. Though I took office under circumstances which might reasonably arouse the jealousy of my friends, an agricultural constituency, the *great* majority of my committee were prepared to support me, and took action and strong measures in my favour.' 'My deep obligation,' he says, 'to the Duke of Newcastle for the great benefit he conferred upon me, not only by his unbroken support, but, far above all, by his original introduction of me to the constituency, made it my duty at once to decline some overtures made to me for the support of my re-election, so it only remained to seek a seat elsewhere.' Some faint hopes were entertained by Mr. Gladstone's friends that the duke might allow him to sit for the rest of the parliament, but the duke was not the man to make concessions to a betrayer of the territorial interest. Mr. Gladstone, too, we must not forget, was still and for many years to come, a tory. When it was suggested that he might stand for North Notts, he wrote to Lord Lincoln: — 'It is not for one of my political opinions without an extreme necessity to stand upon the basis of democratic or popular feeling against the local proprietary: for you who are placed in the soil the case is very different.'

Soon after the session of 1846 began, it became known that the protectionist petition against the Peelite or liberal sitting member for Wigan was likely to succeed in unseating him. 'Proposals were made to me to succeed him, which were held to be eligible. I even wrote my address; on a certain day, I was going down by the mail train. But it was an object for our opponents to keep a

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secretary of state out of parliament during the corn law crisis, and their petition was suddenly withdrawn. The consequence was that I remained until the resignation of the government in July a minister of the crown without a seat in parliament. This was a state of things not agreeable to the spirit of parliamentary government; and some objection was taken, but rather slightly, in the House of Commons. Sir R. Peel stood fire.' There can be little doubt that in our own day a cabinet minister without a seat in either House of parliament would be regarded, in Mr. Gladstone's words, as a public inconvenience and a political anomaly, too *dark* to be tolerated; and he naturally felt it his absolute duty to peep in at every chink and cranny where a seat in parliament could be had. A Peelite, however, had not a good chance at a by-election, and Mr. Gladstone remained out of the House until the general election in the year following.[1] Lord Lincoln, also a member of the cabinet, vacated his seat, but, unlike his friend, found a seat in the course of the session.

Mr. Gladstone's brother-in-law, Lyttelton, was invited to represent the colonial office in the Lords, but had qualms of conscience about the eternal question of the two Welsh bishoprics. 'How could the government of this wonderful empire,' Peel wrote to Mr. Gladstone, 'be ever constructed, if a difference on such a point were to be an obstruction to union? Might not any one now say with perfect honour and, what is of more importance (if they are not identical), perfect satisfaction to his own conscience, "I will not so far set up my own judgment on one isolated measure against that of a whole administration, to such an extent as to preclude me from co-operation with them at a critical period." This, of course, assumes general accordance of sentiment on the great outlines of public policy.' Wise

[1] Sibthorp asked Peel in the H. of C. when Gladstone and Lincoln would appear. Peel replied that if S. would take the Chiltern Hundreds, G. should stand against him. S. retorted that the Chiltern Hundreds is a place under government, and he would never take place from Peel; but if P. would dissolve he would welcome Gladstone to Lincoln — or P. himself; and added privately that he would give P. or G. best bottle of wine in his cellar if he would come to Lincoln and fight him fairly. — *Lord Broughton's Diaries.*

words and sound, that might prevent some of the worst mistakes of some of the best men.



III

This memorable session of 1846 was not a session of argument, but of lobby computations. The case had been argued to the dregs, the conclusion was fixed, and all interest was centred in the play of forces, the working of high motives and low, the balance of parties, the secret ambitions and antagonism of persons. Mr. Gladstone therefore was not in the shaping of the parliamentary result seriously missed, as he had been missed in 1845. 'It soon became evident,' says a leading whig in his journal of the time, 'that Peel had very much over-rated his strength. Even the expectation of December that he could have carried with him enough of his own followers to enable Lord John, if that statesman had contrived to form a government, to pass the repeal of the corn law, was perceived to have been groundless, when the formidable number of the protectionist dissentients appeared. So many even of those who remained with Peel avowed that they disapproved of the measure, and only voted in its favour for the purpose of supporting Peel's government.'[1] The tyranny of the accomplished fact obscures one's sense of the danger that Peel's high courage averted. It is not certain that Lord John as head of a government could have carried the whole body of whigs for total and immediate repeal, Lord Lansdowne and Palmerston openly stating their preference for a fixed duty, and not a few of the smaller men cursing the precipitancy of the Edinburgh letter. It is certain, as is intimated above, that Peel could not have carried over to him the whole of the 112 men who voted for repeal solely because it was his measure. In the course of this session Sir John Hobhouse met Mr. Disraeli at an evening party, and expressed a fear lest Peel having broken up one party would also be the means of breaking up the other. 'That, you may depend upon it, he will,' replied Disraeli, 'or any other party that he has anything to do with.' It was not long after this, when all

[1] *Halifax Papers.*

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was over, that the Duke of Wellington told Lord John that he thought Peel was tired of party and was determined to destroy it. After the repeal of the corn law was safe, the minister was beaten on the Irish coercion bill by what Wellington called a 'blackguard combination' between the whigs and the protectionists. He resigned, and Lord John Russell at the head of the whigs came in.

'Until three or four days before the division on the coercion bill,' Mr. Gladstone says in a memorandum written at the time, 'I had not the smallest idea, beyond mere conjecture, of the views and intentions of Sir R. Peel with respect to himself or to his government. Only we had been governed in all questions, so far as I knew, by the determination to carry the corn bill and to let no collateral circumstance interfere with that main purpose. . . . He sent round a memorandum some days before the division arguing for resignation against dissolution. There was also a correspondence between the Duke of Wellington and him. The duke argued for holding our ground and dissolving. But when we met in cabinet on Friday the 26th of June, not an opposing voice was raised. It was the shortest cabinet I ever knew. Peel himself uttered two or three introductory sentences. He then said that he was convinced that the formation of a conservative party was impossible while he continued in office. That he had made up his mind to resign. That he strongly advised the resignation of the entire government. Some declared their assent. None objected; and when he asked whether it was unanimous, there was no voice in the negative.' 'This was simply,' as Mr. Gladstone added in later notes, 'because he had very distinctly and positively stated his own resolution to resign. It amounted therefore to this,—no one proposed to go on without him.' One other note of Mr. Gladstone's on this grave decision is worth quoting:—

I must put into words the opinion which I silently formed in my room at the colonial office in June 1846, when I got the circulation box with Peel's own memorandum not only arguing in favour of resignation but intimating his own intention to resign,

and with the Duke of Wellington's in the opposite sense. The duke, in my opinion, was right and Peel wrong, but he had borne the brunt of battle already beyond the measure of human strength, and who can wonder that his heart and soul as well as his physical organisation needed rest?[1]

In announcing his retirement to the House (June 29), Peel passed a magnanimous and magnificent eulogium on Cobden.[2] Strange to say, the panegyric gave much offence, and among others to Mr. Gladstone. The next day he entered in his diary: —

Much comment is made upon Peel's declaration about Cobden last night. My objection to it is that it did not do full justice. For if his power of discussion has been great and his end good, his tone has been most harsh and his imputation of bad and vile motives to honourable men incessant. I do not think the thing was done in a manner altogether worthy of Peel's mind. But he, like some smaller men, is, I think, very sensible of the sweetness of the cheers of opponents.

He describes himself at the time as 'grieved and hurt' at these closing sentences; and even a year later, in answer to some inquiry from his father, who still remained protectionist, he wrote: 'July 1, '47. — I do not know anything about Peel's having repented of his speech about Cobden; but I hope that he has seen the great objection to which it is, as I think, fairly open.' Some of his own men who voted for Peel declared that after this speech they bitterly repented.

The suspected personal significance of the Cobden panegyric is described in a memorandum written by Mr. Gladstone a few days later (July 12): —

A day or two afterwards I met Lord Stanley crossing the park,

[1] Cobden also wrote to Peel strongly urging him to hold on, and Peel replied with an effective defence of his own view. *Life of Cobden*, i. chap. 18.

[2] 'There is a name that ought to be associated with the success of these measures; it is not the name of Lord John Russell, neither is it my name. Sir, the name which ought to be, and will be, associated with these measures is the name of a man who, acting from pure and disinterested motives, has advocated their cause with untiring energy, and by appeals to reason expressed by an eloquence the more to be admired because it was unaffected and unadorned — the name which ought to be associated with the success of these measures is the name of Richard Cobden. Without scruple, Sir, I attribute the success of these measures to him.'

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and we had some conversation, first on colonial matters. Then he said, 'Well, I think our friend Peel went rather far last night about Cobden, did he not?' I stated to him my very deep regret on reading that passage (as well as what followed about the monopolists), and that, not for its impolicy but for its injustice. All that he said was true, but he did not say the whole truth; and the effect of the whole, as a whole, was therefore untrue. Mr. Cobden has throughout argued the corn question on the principle of holding up the landlords of England to the people, as plunderers and as knaves for maintaining the corn law to save their rents, and as fools because it was not necessary for that purpose. This was passed by, while he was praised for sincerity, eloquence, indefatigable zeal.

On Thursday the 2nd I saw Lord Aberdeen. He agreed in the general regret at the tone of that part of the speech. He said he feared it was designed with a view to its effects, for the purpose of making it impossible that Peel should ever again be placed in connection with the conservative party as a party. He said that Peel had absolutely made up his mind never again to lead it, never again to enter office; that he had indeed made up his mind, at one time, to quit parliament, but that probably on the Queen's account, and in deference to her wishes, he had abandoned this part of his intentions. But that he was fixed in the idea to maintain his independent and separate position, taking part in public questions as his views of public interests might from time to time seem to require. I represented that this for *him*, and in the House of Commons, was an intention absolutely impossible to fulfil; that with his greatness he could not remain there overshadowing and eclipsing all governments, and yet have to do with no governments; that acts cannot for such a man be isolated, they must be in series, and his view of public affairs must coincide with one body of men rather than another, and that the attraction must place him in relations with them. Lord Aberdeen said that Earl Spencer in his later days was Sir R. Peel's ideal, — rare appearances for serious purposes, and without compromise generally to the independence of his personal habits. I put it that this was possible in the House of Lords, but only there. . . . On Saturday I saw him again as he came from the

palace. He represented that the Queen was sorely grieved at this change; which indeed I had already heard from Catherine through Lady Lyttelton, but this showed that it continued. And again on Monday we heard through Lady Lyttelton that the Queen said it was a comfort to think that the work of that day would soon be over. It appears too that she spoke of the kindness she had received from her late ministers; and that the Prince's sentiments are quite as decided.

On Monday we delivered up the seals at our several audiences. Her Majesty said simply but very kindly to me, 'I am very sorry to receive them from you.' I thanked her for my father's baronetcy, and apologised for his not coming to court. She had her glove half off, which made me think I was to kiss hands; but she simply bowed and retired. Her eyes told tales, but she smiled and put on a cheerful countenance. It was in fact the 1st of September 1841 over again as to feelings; but this time with more mature judgment and longer experience. Lord Aberdeen and Sir J. Graham kissed hands, but this was by favour.

The same night I saw Sidney Herbert at Lady Pembroke's. He gave me in great part the same view of Sir R. Peel's speech, himself holding the same opinion with Lord Aberdeen. But he thought that Peel's natural temper, which he said is very violent though usually under thorough discipline, broke out and coloured that part of the speech, but that the end in view was to cut off all possibility of reunion. He referred to a late conversation with Peel, in which Peel had intimated his intention of remaining in parliament and acting for himself without party, to which Herbert replied that he knew of no minister who had done so except lord Bute, a bad precedent. Peel rejoined 'Lord Grenville,' showing that his mind had been at work upon the subject. He had heard him not long ago discussing his position with Lord Aberdeen and Sir James Graham, when he said, putting his hand up to the side of his head, 'Ah! you do not know what I suffer here.'

Yesterday Lord Lyndhurst called on me. . . . He proceeded to ask me what I thought with respect to our political course. He said he conceived that the quarrel was a bygone quarrel, that the animosities attending it ought now to be forgotten, and the old relations of amity and confidence among the members

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of the conservative body resumed. I told him, in the first place, that I felt some difficulty in answering him in my state of total ignorance, so far as direct communication is concerned, of Sir R. Peel's knowledge and intentions; that on Tuesday I had seen him on colonial matters, and had talked on the probable intentions of the new government as to the sugar duties, but that I did not like to ask what he did not seem to wish to tell, and that I did not obtain the smallest inkling of light as to his intentions in respect to that very matter now immediately pending. He observed it was a pity Sir R. Peel was so uncommunicative; but that after having been so long connected with him, he would certainly be very unwilling to do anything disagreeable to him; still, if I and others thought fit, he was ready to do what he could towards putting the party together again. I then replied that I thought, so far as extinguishing the animosities which had been raised in connection with the corn law was concerned, I could not doubt its propriety, that I thought we were bound to give a fair trial to the government, and not to assume beforehand an air of opposition, and that if so much of confidence is due to them, much more is it due towards friends from whom we have differed on the single question of free trade, that our confidence should be reposed in them. That I thought, however, that in any case, before acting together as a party, we ought to consider well the outline of our further course, particularly with reference to Irish questions and the church there, as I was of opinion that it was very doubtful whether we had now a justification for opposing any change with respect to it, meaning as to the property. He said with his accustomed facility, 'Ah yes, it will require to be considered what course we shall take.'[1]

I met Lord Aberdeen the same afternoon in Bond Street, and told him the substance of this conversation. He said, 'It is stated that Lord G. Bentinck is to resign, and that they are to have you.' That, I replied, was quite new to me. The (late) chancellor had simply said, when I pointed out that the difficulties lay in the House of Commons, that it was true, and that my being there would make the way more open. I confess I am very doubtful of that, and much disposed to believe that I am regretted, as

[1] See *Life of Lord Lyndhurst*, by Lord Campbell, p. 163.

things and persons *absent* often are, in comparison with the present. At dinner I sat between Graham and Jocelyn. The latter observed particularly on the absence from Sir R. Peel's speech of any acknowledgment towards his supporters and his colleagues. These last, however, are named. Jocelyn said the new government were much divided. . . . Jocelyn believes that Lord Palmerston will not be very long in union with this cabinet.

With Sir J. Graham I had much interesting conversation. I told him, I thought it but fair to mention to him the regret and blame which I found to have been elicited from all persons whom I saw and conversed with, by the passage relating to Cobden. He said he believed it was the same on all hands; and that the new government in particular were most indignant at it. He feared that it was deliberately preconceived and for the purpose; and went on to repeat what Lord Aberdeen had told me, that Sir R. Peel had been within an ace of quitting parliament, and was determined to abjure party and stand aloof for ever, and never resume office. I replied as before, that in the House of Commons it was impossible. He went on to sketch the same kind of future for himself. He was weary of labour at thirteen or fourteen hours a day, and of the intolerable abuse to which he was obliged to submit; but his habits were formed in the House of Commons and for it, and he was desirous to continue there as an independent gentleman, taking part from time to time in public business as he might find occasion, and giving his leisure to his family and to books. I said, 'Are you not building houses of cards? Do you conceive that men who have played a great part, who have swayed the great moving forces of the state, who have led the House of Commons and given the tone to public policy, can at their will remain there, but renounce the consequences of their remaining, and refuse to fulfil what must fall to them in some contingency of public affairs? The country will demand that they who are the ablest shall not stand by inactive.' He said Sir Robert Peel had all but given up his seat. I answered that would at any rate have made his resolution a practicable one.

He said, 'You can have no conception of what the virulence is against Peel and me.' I said, No; that from having been out of parliament during these debates my sense of these things was less

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lively and my position in some respects different. He replied, 'Your position is quite different. You are free to take any course you please with perfect honour.' I told him of Lord Lyndhurst's visit and the purport of his conversation, of the meaning of the junction on the opposition bench in the Lords, and of what we had said of the difficulties in the Commons. He said, 'My resentment is not against the new government, but against the seventy-three conservative members of parliament who displaced the late government by a factious vote; nearly all of them believed the bill to be necessary for Ireland; and they knew that our removal was not desired by the crown, not desired by the country. I find no fault with the new ministers, they are fairly in possession of power — but with those gentlemen I can never unite.' Later, however, in the evening he relented somewhat, and said he must admit that what they did was done under great provocation; that it was no wonder they regarded themselves as betrayed; and that unfortunately it had been the fate of Sir R. Peel to perform a similar operation twice. . . .

Graham dwelt with fondness and with pain on Lord Stanley; said he had very great qualities — that his speech on the corn law, consisting as it did simply of old fallacies though in new dress, was a magnificent speech, one of his greatest and happiest efforts — that all his conduct in the public eye had been perfectly free from exception; that he feared, however, he had been much in Lord Geo. Bentinck's counsels, and had concurred in much more than he had himself done, and had aided in marking out the course taken in the House of Commons. He had called on Lord Stanley several times but had never been able to see him, he trusted through accident, but seemed to doubt.

On the Cobden eulogy, though he did not defend it outright by any means, he said, 'Do you think if Cobden had not existed the repeal of the corn law would have been carried at this moment?' I said very probably not, that he had added greatly to the force of the movement and accelerated its issue, that I admitted the truth of every word that Peel had uttered, but complained of its omissions, of its spirit towards his own friends, of its false moral effect, as well as and much more than of its mere impolicy.[1]

[1] Six years later (Nov. 26, 1852), Mr. Gladstone in the House of Commons said of Cobden, with words of characteristic qualification: — 'Agree

IV

Still more interesting is an interview with the fallen minister himself, written ten days after it took place: —

*July* 24. — On Monday the 13th I visited Sir R. Peel, and found him in his dressing-room laid up with a cut in one of his feet. My immediate purpose was to let him know the accounts from New Zealand which Lord Grey had communicated to me. . . . However *I* led on from subject to subject, for I thought it my duty not to quit town, at the end possibly of my political connection with Sir R. Peel, that is if he determined to individualise himself, without giving the opportunity at least for free communication. Though he opened nothing, yet he followed unreluctantly. I said the government appeared to show signs of internal discord or weakness. He said, Yes; related that Lord John did not mean to include Lord Grey, that he sent Sir G. Grey and C. Wood to propitiate him, that Lord Grey was not only not hostile but volunteered his services. At last I broke the ice and said, 'You have seen Lord Lyndhurst.' He said, 'Yes.' I mentioned the substance of my interview with Lord Lyndhurst, and also what I had heard from Goulburn of his. He said, 'I am *hors de combat*.' I said to him, 'Is that possible? Whatever your present intentions may be, can it be done?' He said he had been twice prime minister, and nothing should induce him again to take part in the formation of a government; the labour and anxiety were too great; and he repeated more than once emphatically with regard to the work of his post, 'No one in the least degree knows what it is. I have told the Queen that I part from her with the deepest sentiments of gratitude and attachment; but that there is one thing she must not ask of me, and that is to place myself again in the same position.' Then he spoke of the immense accumulation. 'There is the whole correspondence with the Queen, several times a day, and all requiring to be in my own hand, and to be carefully done; the whole correspondence with peers and members

you may in his general politics, or you may not; complain you may, if you think you have cause, of the mode and force with which in the freedom of debate he commonly states his opinions in this House. But it is impossible for us to deny that those benefits of which we are now acknowledging the existence are, in no small part at any rate, due to the labours in which he has borne so prominent a share.'

BOOK II. 1846.

of parliament, in my own hand, as well as other persons of consequence; the sitting seven or eight hours a day to listen in the House of Commons. Then I must, of course, have my mind in the principal subjects connected with the various departments, such as the Oregon question for example, and all the reading connected with them. I can hardly tell you, for instance, what trouble the New Zealand question gave me. Then there is the difficulty that you have in conducting such questions on account of your colleague whom they concern.'

It was evident from this, as it had been from other signs, that he did not think Stanley had been happy in his management of the New Zealand question. I said, however, 'I can quite assent to the proposition that no one understands the labour of your post; that, I think, is all I ever felt I could know about it, that there is nothing else like it. But then you have been prime minister in a sense in which no other man has been it since Mr. Pitt's time.' He said, 'But Mr. Pitt got up every day at eleven o'clock, and drank two bottles of port wine every night.' 'And died of old age at forty-six,' I replied. 'This all strengthens the case. I grant your full and perfect claim to retirement in point of justice and reason; if such a claim can be made good by amount of service, I do not see how yours could be improved. You have had extraordinary physical strength to sustain you; and you have performed an extraordinary task. Your government has not been carried on by a cabinet, but by the heads of departments each in communication with you.' He assented, and added it had been what every government ought to be, a government of confidence in one another. 'I have felt the utmost confidence as to matters of which I had no knowledge, and so have the rest. Lord Aberdeen in particular said that nothing would induce him to hold office on any other principle, or to be otherwise than perfectly free as to previous consultations.' And he spoke of the defects of the Melbourne government as a mere government of departments without a centre of unity, and of the possibility that the new ministers might experience difficulty in the same respect. I then went on to say, 'Mr. Perceval, Lord Liverpool, Lord Melbourne were not prime ministers in this sense; what Mr. Canning might have been, the time was too short to show. I fully grant that

your labours have been incredible, but, allow me to say, that is not the question. The question is not whether you are entitled to retire, but whether after all you have done, and in the position you occupy before the country, you can remain in the House of Commons as an isolated person, and hold yourself aloof from the great movements of political forces which sway to and fro there?' He said, 'I think events will answer that question better than any reasoning beforehand.' I replied, 'That is just what I should rely upon, and should therefore urge how impossible it is for you to lay down with certainty a foregone conclusion such as that which you have announced to-day, and which events are not to influence, merely that you will remain in parliament and yet separate yourself from the parliamentary system by which our government is carried on.' Then he said, (If it is necessary I will) 'go out of parliament' — the first part of the sentence was indistinctly muttered, but the purport such as I have described. To which I merely replied that I hoped not, and that the country would have something to say upon that too. . . .

No man can doubt that he is the strong man of this parliament — of this political generation. Then it is asked, Is he honest? But this is a question which I think cannot justly be raised nor treated as admissible in the smallest degree by those who have known and worked with him. . . . He spoke of the immense multiplication of details in public business and the enormous task imposed upon available time and strength by the work of attendance in the House of Commons. He agreed that it was extremely adverse to the growth of greatness among our public men; and he said the mass of public business increased so fast that he could not tell what it was to end in, and did not venture to speculate even for a few years upon the mode of administering public affairs. He thought the consequence was already manifest in its being not well done.

It sometimes occurred to him whether it would after all be a good arrangement to have the prime minister in the House of Lords, which would get rid of the very encroaching duty of attendance on and correspondence with the Queen. I asked if in that case it would not be quite necessary that the leader in the Commons should frequently take upon himself to make decisions

BOOK II. 1846.

which ought properly to be made by the head of the government? He said, Certainly, and that that would constitute a great difficulty. That although Lord Melbourne might be very well adapted to take his part in such a plan, there were, he believed, difficulties in it under him when Lord J. Russell led the House of Commons. That when he led the House in 1828 under the Duke of Wellington as premier, he had a very great advantage in the disposition of the duke to follow the judgments of others in whom he had confidence with respect to all civil matters. He said it was impossible during the session even to work the public business through the medium of the cabinet, such is the pressure upon time. . . . He told me he had suffered dreadfully in his head on the left side — that twenty-two or twenty-three years ago he injured the ear by the use of a detonating tube in shooting. Since then he had always had a noise on that side, and when he had the work of office upon him, this and the pain became scarcely bearable at times, as I understood him. Brodie told him that 'as some overwork one part and some another, he had overworked his brain,' but he said that with this exception his health was good. It was pleasant to me to find and feel by actual contact as it were (though I had no suspicion of the contrary) his manner as friendly and as much unhurt as at any former period.

V

Before leaving office Peel wrote to Mr. Gladstone (June 20) requesting him to ask his father whether it would be acceptable to him to be proposed to the Queen for a baronetcy. 'I should name him to the Queen,' he said, 'as the honoured representative of a great class of the community which has raised itself by its integrity and industry to high social eminence. I should gratify also my own feeling by a mark of personal respect for a name truly worthy of such illustration as hereditary honour can confer.' John Gladstone replied in becoming words, but honestly mentioned that he had published his strong opinion of the injurious consequences that he dreaded from 'the stupendous experiment about to be made' in commercial policy. Peel told him that this made no difference.[1]

[1] Parker, iii. pp. 434–5.

At the close of the session a trivial incident occurred that caused Mr. Gladstone a disproportionate amount of vexation for several months. Hume stated in the House that the colonial secretary had countersigned what was a lie, in a royal patent appointing a certain Indian judge. The 'lie' consisted in reciting that a judge then holding the post had resigned, whereas he had not resigned, and the correct phrase was that the Queen had permitted him to retire. Lord George Bentinck, whose rage was then at its fiercest, pricked up his ears, and a day or two later declared that Mr. Secretary Gladstone had 'deliberately affirmed, not through any oversight or inadvertence or thoughtlessness, but designedly and of his own malice prepense, that which in his heart he knew not to be true.' Things of this sort may either be passed over in disdain, or taken with logician's severity. Mr. Gladstone might well have contented himself with the defence that his signature had been purely formal, and that every secretary of state is called upon to put his name to recitals of minute technical fact which he must take on trust from his officials. As it was, he chose to take Bentinck's reckless aspersion at its highest, and the combat lasted for weeks and months. Bentinck got up the case with his usual industrious tenacity; he insisted that the Queen's name stood at that moment in the degrading position of being prefixed to a proclamation that all her subjects knew to recite and to be founded upon falsehood; he declared that the whole business was a job perpetrated by the outgoing ministers, to fill up a post that was not vacant; he imputed no corrupt motive to Mr. Gladstone; he admitted that Mr. Gladstone was free from the betrayal and treachery practised by his political friends; but he could not acquit him of having been in this particular affair the tool and the catspaw of two old foxes greedier and craftier than himself. To all this unmannerly stuff the recipient of it only replied by holding its author the more tight to the point of the original offence; the blood of his highland ancestors was up, and the poet's contest between eagle and serpent was not more dire. The affair was submitted to Lord Stanley. He reluctantly consented (Oct. 29) to decide

BOOK II. 1846.

the single question whether Bentinck was justified 'on the information before him in using the language quoted.' There was a dispute what information Bentinck had before him, and upon this point, where Bentinck's course might in his own polite vocabulary be marked as pure shuffling, Lord Stanley returned the papers (Feb. 8, 1847) and expressed his deep regret that he could bring about no more satisfactory result. Even so late as the spring of 1847 Mr. Gladstone was only dissuaded by the urgent advice of Lord Lincoln and others from pursuing the fray. It was, so far as I know, the only personal quarrel into which he ever allowed himself to be drawn.

# CHAPTER XI

## THE TRACTARIAN CATASTROPHE

(*1841–1846*)

> The movement of 1833 started out of the anti-Roman feelings of the Emancipation time. It was anti-Roman as much as it was anti-sectarian and anti-erastian. It was to avert the danger of people becoming Romanists from ignorance of church principles. This was all changed in one important section of the party. The fundamental conceptions were reversed. It was not the Roman church but the English church that was put on its trial. . . . From this point of view the object of the movement was no longer to elevate and improve an independent English church, but to approximate it as far as possible to what was assumed to be undeniable — the perfect catholicity of Rome. — Dean Church.



The fall of Peel and the break-up of his party in the state coincided pretty nearly with a hardly less memorable rupture in that rising party in the church, with which Mr. Gladstone had more or less associated himself almost from its beginning. Two main centres of authority and leading in the land were thus at the same moment dislodged and dispersed. A long struggle in secular concerns had come to a decisive issue; and the longer struggle in religious concerns had reached a critical and menacing stage. The reader will not wonder that two events so far-reaching as the secession of Newman and the fall of Sir Robert, coupled as these public events were with certain importunities of domestic circumstance of which I shall have more to say by and by, brought Mr. Gladstone to an epoch in his life of extreme perturbation. Roughly it may be said to extend from 1845 to 1852.

At the time of his resignation in the beginning of 1845, he wrote to Lord John Manners, then his colleague at Newark, a curious account of his views on party life.

BOOK II. 1845.

Lord John was then acting with the Young England group inspired by Disraeli, who has left a picture of them in *Sybil*, the most far-seeing of all his novels.

*To Lord John Manners.*

*Jan.* 30, 1845. — You, I have no doubt, are disappointed as to the working of a conservative government. And so should I be if I were to estimate its results by a comparison with the anticipations which, from a distance and in the abstract, I had once entertained of political life. But now my expectations not only from this but from any government are very small. If they do a little good, if they prevent others from doing a good deal of evil, if they maintain an unblemished character, it is my fixed conviction that under the circumstances of the times I can as an independent member of parliament, for I am now virtually such, ask no more. And I do entertain the strongest impression that if, with your honourable and upright mind, you had been called upon for years to consult as one responsible for the movements of great parliamentary bodies, if you thus had been accustomed to look into public questions at close quarters, your expectations from an administration, and your dispositions towards it, would be materially changed. . . .

The principles and moral powers of government as such are sinking day by day, and it is not by laws and parliaments that they can be renovated. . . . I must venture even one step further, and say that such schemes of regeneration as those which were propounded (not, I am bound to add, by you) at Manchester,[1] appear to me to be most mournful delusions; and their re-issue, for their real parentage is elsewhere, from the bosom of the party to which we belong, an omen of the worst kind if they were likely to obtain currency under the new sanction they have received. It is most easy to complain as you do of *laissez-faire* and *laissez-aller;* nor do I in word or in heart presume to blame you; but I should sorely blame myself if with my experience and convictions of *the growing impotence of government for its highest functions*, I were either to recommend attempts beyond its powers, which would react unfavourably upon its remaining capabilities, or to be a party to

[1] Some proceedings, I think, of Mr. Disraeli and his Young England friends.

proposed substitutes for its true moral and paternal work which appear to me mere counterfeits.

On this letter we may note in passing, first, that the tariff legislation did in the foundations what the Young England party wished to do in a superficial and flimsy fashion; and second, it was the tariff legislation that drove back a rising tide of socialism, both directly by vastly improving the condition of labour, and indirectly by force of the doctrine of free exchange which was thus corroborated by circumstances. Of this we shall see more by and by.

Throughout the years of Sir Robert Peel's government, Mr. Gladstone had been keenly intent upon the progress of religious affairs at Oxford. 'From 1841 till the beginning of 1845,' he says in a fragmentary note, 'I continued a hard-working official man, but with a decided predominance of religious over secular interests. Although I had little of direct connection with Oxford and its teachers, I was regarded in common fame as tarred with their brush; and I was not so blind as to be unaware that for the clergy this meant not yet indeed prosecution, but proscription and exclusion from advancement by either party in the state, and for laymen a vague and indeterminate prejudice with serious doubts how far persons infected in this particular manner could have any real capacity for affairs. Sir Robert Peel must, I think, have exercised much self-denial when he put me in his cabinet in 1843.' The movement that began in 1833 had by the opening of the next decade revealed startling tendencies, and its first stage was now slowly but unmistakeably passing into the second. Mr. Gladstone has told us[1] how he stood at this hour of crisis; how strongly he believed that the church of England would hold her ground, and even revive the allegiance not only of the masses, but of those large and powerful nonconforming bodies who were supposed to exist only as a consequence of the neglect of its duties by the national church. He has told us also how little he foresaw the second phase of the Oxford movement — the break-up of a distinguished and imposing generation of

[1] Chapter of Autobiography: *Gleanings*, vii. pp. 142–3.

BOOK II. 1841.

clergy; 'the spectacle of some of the most gifted sons reared by Oxford for the service of the church of England, hurling at her head the hottest bolts of the Vatican; and along with this strange deflexion on one side, a not less convulsive rationalist movement on the other, — all ending in contention and estrangement, and in suspicions worse than either, because less accessible and more intractable.'

II

The landmarks of the Tractarian story are familiar, and I do not ask the reader in any detail to retrace them. The publication of Froude's *Remains* was the first flagrant beacon lighting the path of divergence from the lines of historical high churchmen in an essentially anti-protestant direction. Mr. Gladstone read the first instalment of this book (1838) 'with repeated regrets.' Then came the blaze kindled by Tract Ninety (1841). This, in the language of its author and his friends, was the famous attempt to clear the Articles from the glosses encrusting them like barnacles, and to bring out the old catholic truth that man had done his worst to disfigure and to mutilate, and yet in spite of all man's endeavour it was in the Articles still. Mr. Gladstone, as we have seen, regarded Tract Ninety with uneasy doubts as to its drift, its intentions, the way in which the church and the world would take it. 'This No. Ninety of *Tracts for the Times* which I read by desire of Sir R. Inglis,' he writes to Lord Lyttelton, 'is like a repetition of the publication of Froude's *Remains*, and Newman has again burned his fingers. The most serious feature in the tract to my mind is that, doubtless with very honest intentions and with his mind turned for the moment so entirely towards those inclined to defection, and therefore occupying *their* point of view exclusively, he has in writing it placed himself quite outside the church of England in point of spirit and sympathy. As far as regards the proposition for which he intended mainly to argue, I believe not only that he is right, but that it is an a b c truth, almost a truism of the reign of Elizabeth, namely that the authoritative documents of the church of England were not meant to bind *all* men to every opinion

of their authors, and particularly that they intended to deal as gently with prepossessions thought to look towards Rome, as the necessity of securing a certain amount of reformation would allow. Certainly also the terms in which Newman characterises the present state of the church of England in his introduction are calculated to give both pain and alarm; and the whole aspect of the tract is like the assumption of a new position.'

Next followed the truly singular struggle for the university chair of poetry at the end of the same year, between a no-popery candidate and a Puseyite. Seldom surely has the service of the muses been pressed into so alien a debate. Mr. Gladstone was cut to the heart at the prospect of a sentence in the shape of a vote for this professorship, passed by the university of Oxford 'upon all that congeries of opinions which the rude popular notion associates with the *Tracts for the Times*.' Such a sentence would be a disavowal by the university of catholic principles in the gross; the association between catholic principles and the church of England would be miserably weakened; and those who at all sympathised with the Tracts would be placed in the position of aliens, corporally within the pale, but in spirit estranged or outcast. If the church should be thus broken up, there would be no space for catholicity between the rival pretensions of an ultra-protestantised or decatholicised English church, and the communion of Rome. 'Miserable choice!' These and other arguments are strongly pressed (December 3, 1841) in favour of an amicable compromise, in a letter addressed to his close friend Frederic Rogers. In the same letter Mr. Gladstone says that he cannot profess to understand or to have studied the Tracts on Reserve.[1] He 'partakes perhaps in the popular prejudice against them.' Anybody can now see in the coolness of distant time that it was these writings on Reserve that roused not merely prejudice but fury in the public mind — a fury that without

[1] On Reserve in Communicating Religious Knowledge — Tracts 80 and 87. (1837–40). With the ominous and in every sense un-English superscription, *Ad Clerum*. Isaac Williams was the author.

BOOK II. 1841.

either justice or logic extended from hatred of Romanisers to members of the church of Rome itself. It affected for the worse the feeling between England and Ireland, for in those days to be ultra-protestant was to be anti-Irish; and it greatly aggravated, first the storm about the Maynooth grant in 1845, and then the far wilder storm about the papal aggression six years later.

Further fuel for excitement was supplied the same year (1841) in a fantastic project by which a bishop, appointed alternately by Great Britain and Prussia and with his head-quarters at Jerusalem, was to take charge through a somewhat miscellaneous region, of any German protestants or members of the church of England or anybody else who might be disposed to accept his authority. The scheme stirred much enthusiasm in the religious world, but it deepened alarm among the more logical of the high churchmen. Ashley and the evangelicals were keen for it as the blessed beginning of a restoration of Israel, and the king of Prussia hoped to gain over the Lutherans and others of his subjects by this side-door into true episcopacy. Politics were not absent, and some hoped that England might find in the new protestant church such an instrument in those uncomfortable regions, as Russia possessed in the Greek church and France in the Latin. Dr. Arnold was delighted at the thought that the new church at Jerusalem would comprehend persons using different liturgies and subscribing different articles,—his favourite pattern for the church of England. Pusey at first rather liked the idea of a bishop to represent the ancient British church in the city of the Holy Sepulchre; but Newman and Hope, with a keener instinct for their position, distrusted the whole design in root and branch as a betrayal of the church, and Pusey soon came to their mind. With caustic scorn Newman asked how the anglican church, without ceasing to be a church, could become an associate and protector of nestorians, jacobites, monophysites, and all the heretics one could hear of, and even form a sort of league with the mussulman against the Greek orthodox and the Latin catholics. Mr. Gladstone could not be drawn to go these lengths. Nobody could be more of a logician than Mr.

Gladstone when he liked, no logician could wield a more trenchant blade; but nobody ever knew better in complex circumstance the perils of the logical short cut. Hence, according to his general manner in all dubious cases, he moved slowly, and laboured to remove practical grounds for objection. Ashley describes him (October 16) at a dinner at Bunsen's rejoicing in the bishopric, and proposing the health of the new prelate, and this gave Ashley pleasure, for 'Gladstone is a good man and a clever man and an industrious man.'[1] While resolute against any plan for what Hope called gathering up the scraps of Christendom and making a new church out of them, and resolute against what he himself called the inauguration of an experimental or fancy church, Mr. Gladstone declared himself ready 'to brave misconstruction for the sake of union with any Christian men, provided the terms of union were not contrary to sound principles.' With a strenuous patience that was thoroughly characteristic, he set to work to bring the details of the scheme into an order conformable to his own views, and he even became a trustee of the endowment fund. Two bishops in succession filled the see, but in the fulness of time most men agreed with Newman, who 'never heard of any either good or harm that bishopric had ever done,' except what it had done for him. To him it gave a final shake, and brought him on to the beginning of the end.[2]

In the summer of 1842 Mr. Gladstone received confidences that amazed him. Here is a passage from his diary: —

*July* 31, 1842. — Walk with R. Williams to converse on the subject of our recent letters. I made it my object to learn from him the general view of the ulterior section of the Oxford writers and their friends. It is startling. They look not merely to the renewal and development of the catholic idea within the pale of the church of England, but seem to consider the main condition of that development and of all health (some tending even to say

[1] *Life of Shaftesbury*, i. p. 377. There is a letter from Bunsen (p. 373), in which he exclaims how wonderful it is 'that the great-grandson of Anthony Earl of Shaftesbury, the friend of Voltaire, should write thus to the great-grandson of Frederick the Great, the admirer of both.' But not more wonderful than Bunsen forgetting that Frederick had no children.

[2] See *Memoirs of J. R. Hope-Scott*, i. chapters 15–17. *Apologia*, chapter 3, *ad fin.*

BOOK II. 1843.

of all life) to be reunion with the church of Rome as the see of Peter. They recognise, however, authority in the church of England, and abide in her without love specifically fixed upon her, to seek the fulfilment of this work of reunion. It is, for example, he said, the sole object of Oakeley's life. They do not look to any defined order of proceedings in the way of means. They consider that the end is to be reached through catholicising the mind of the members of the church of England, but do not seem to feel that this can be done to any great degree in working out and giving free scope to her own rubrical system. They have no strong feeling of revulsion from actual evils in the church of Rome, first, because they do not wish to judge; secondly, especially not to judge the saints; thirdly, they consider that infallibility is somewhere and nowhere but there. They could not remain in the church of England if they thought that she dogmatically condemned anything that the church of Rome has defined *de fide*, but they do and will remain on the basis of the argument of Tract 90; upon which, after mental conflict, they have settled steadily down. They regret what Newman has said strongly against the actual system of the church of Rome, and they could not have affirmed, though neither do they positively deny it. Wherever Roman doctrine *de fide* is oppugned they must protest; but short of this they render absolute obedience to their ecclesiastical superiors in the church of England. They expect to work on in practical harmony with those who look mainly to the restoration of catholic ideas on the foundation laid by the church of England as reformed, and who take a different view as to reunion with Rome in particular, though of course desiring the reunion of the whole body of Christ. All this is matter for very serious consideration. In the meantime I was anxious to put it down while fresh.

Now was the time at which Mr. Gladstone's relations with Manning and Hope began to approach their closest. Newman, the great enchanter, in obedience to his bishop had dropped the issue of the Tracts; had withdrawn from all public discussion of ecclesiastical politics; had given up his work in Oxford; and had retired with a neophyte or two to Littlemore, a hamlet on the outskirts of the ever venerable city, there to pursue his theological studies, to prepare translations

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ÆT. 34.

of Athanasius, to attend to his little parish, and generally to go about his own business so far as he might be permitted by the restlessness alike of unprovoked opponents and unsought disciples. This was the autumn of 1843. In October Manning sent to Mr. Gladstone two letters that he had received from Newman, indicating only too plainly, as they were both convinced, that the foundations of their leader's anglicanism had been totally undermined by the sweeping repudiation alike by episcopal and university authority of the doctrines of Tract Ninety. Dr. Pusey, on the other hand, admitted that the expressions in Newman's letter were portentous, but did not believe that they necessarily meant secession. In a man of the world this would not have been regarded as candid. For Newman says, 'I formally told Pusey that I expected to leave the church of England in the autumn of 1843, and begged him to tell others, that no one might be taken by surprise or might trust me in the interval.'[1] But Newman has told us that he had from the first great difficulty in making Dr. Pusey understand the differences between them. The letters stand in the *Apologia* (chapter iv. § 2) to tell their own tale. To Mr. Gladstone their shock was extreme, not only by reason of the catastrophe to which they pointed, but from the ill-omened shadow that they threw upon the writer's probity of mind if not of heart. 'I stagger to and fro like a drunken man,' he wrote to Manning, 'I am at my wit's end.' He found some of Newman's language, 'forgive me if I say it, more like the expressions of some Faust gambling for his soul, than the records of the inner life of a great Christian teacher.' In his diary, he puts it thus : —

*Oct.* 28, 1843. — S. Simon and S. Jude. St. James's 11 A.M. with a heavy heart. Another letter had come from Manning, enclosing a second from Newman, which announced that since the summer of 1839 he had had the conviction that the church of Rome is the catholic church, and ours not a branch of the catholic church because not in communion with Rome; that he had resigned St. Mary's because he felt he could not with a safe conscience longer

[1] *Story of Dr. Pusey's Life*, p. 227.

BOOK II. 1843.

teach in her; that by the article in the *British Critic* on the catholicity of the English church he had quieted his mind for two years; that in his letter to the Bishop of Oxford, written most reluctantly, he, as the best course under the circumstances, committed himself again; that his alarms revived with that wretched affair of the Jerusalem bishopric, and had increased ever since; that Manning's interference had only made him the more realise his views; that Manning might make what use he pleased of his letters; he was relieved of a heavy heart; yet he trusted that God would keep him from hasty steps and resolves with a doubting conscience! How are the mighty fallen and the weapons of war perished!

With the characteristic spirit with which, in politics and in every other field, he always insisted on espying patches of blue sky where others saw unbroken cloud, he was amazed that Newman did not, in spite of all the pranks of the Oxford heads, perceive the English church to be growing in her members more catholic from year to year, and how much more plain and undeniable was the sway of catholic principles within its bounds, since the time when he entertained no shadow of doubt about it. But while repeating his opinion that in many of the Tracts the language about the Roman church had often been far too censorious, Mr. Gladstone does not, nor did he ever, shrink from designating conversion to that church by the unflinching names of lapse and fall.[1] As he was soon to put it, 'The temptation towards the church of Rome of which some are conscious, has never been before my mind in any other sense than as other plain and flagrant sins have been before it.'[2]

Two days later he wrote to Manning again: —

*Oct.* 30, 1843. — . . . I have still to say that my impressions, though without more opportunity of testing them I cannot regard them as final, are still and strongly to the effect that upon the promulgation of those two letters to the world, Newman stands in the general view a *disgraced man* — and all men, all principles, with which he has had to do, disgraced in proportion to the proximity

[1] This letter of October 28 is in Purcell, *Manning*, i. p. 242.

[2] Mr. Gladstone to Dr. Hook, Jan. 30, '47.

of their connection. And further I am persuaded that were he not spellbound and entranced, he could not fail to see the gross moral incoherence of the parts of his two statements; and that were I upon the terms which would warrant it, I should feel it my duty, at a time when as now, *summa res agitur*, to tell him so, after having, however, tried my own views by reference to some other mind, for instance to your own. But surely it will he said that his 'committing himself again' was simply a deliberate protestation of what he knew to be untrue. I have no doubt of his having proceeded honestly; no doubt that he can show it; but I say that those two letters are quite enough to condemn a man in whom one has no πίστις ἠθική: much more then one whom a great majority of the community regard with prejudice and deep suspicion. . . . With regard to your own feelings believe me that I enter into them; and indeed our communications have now for many years been too warm, free, and confiding to make it necessary for me, as I trust, to say what a resource and privilege it is to me to take counsel with you upon those absorbing subjects and upon the fortunes of the church; to which I desire to feel with you that life, strength, and all means and faculties, ought freely to be devoted, and indeed from such devotion alone can they derive anything of true value.[1]

The next blow was struck in the summer of 1844 by Ward's *Ideal of a Christian Church*, which had the remarkable effect of harassing and afflicting all the three high camps — the historical anglicans, the Puseyites and moderate tractarians, and finally the Newmanites and moderate Romanisers.[2] The writer was one of the most powerful dialecticians of the day, defiant, aggressive, implacable in his logic, unflinching in any stand that he chose to take; the master-representative of tactics and a temper like those to which Laud and Strafford gave the pungent name of Thorough. It was not its theology, still less its history,

[1] It was on the fifth of November, a week after this correspondence, that Manning preached the Guy Fawkes sermon which caused Newman to send J. A. Froude to the door to tell Manning that he was 'not at home.' — Purcell, i. pp. 245–9.

[2] For a full account of this book and its consequences the reader will always consult chapters xi., xii., and xiii., of Mr. Wilfrid Ward's admirably written work, *William George Ward and the Oxford Movement*.

BOOK II. 1845.

that made his book the signal for the explosion; it was his audacious proclamation that the whole cycle of Roman doctrine was gradually possessing numbers of English churchmen, and that he himself, a clergyman in orders and holding his fellowship on the tenure of church subscription, had in so subscribing to the Articles renounced no single Roman doctrine. This, and not the six hundred pages of argumentation, was the ringing challenge that provoked a plain issue, precipitated a decisive struggle, and brought the first stage of tractarianism to a close.

It was impossible that Mr. Gladstone even in the thick of his tariffs, his committees and deputations, his cabinet duties, and all the other absorbing occupations of an important minister in strong harness, should let a publication, in his view so injurious, pass in silence.[1] With indignation he flew to his intrepid pen, and dealt as trenchantly with Ward as Ward himself had dealt trenchantly with the reformers and all others whom he found planted in his dialectic way. Mr. Gladstone held the book up to stringent reproof for its capricious injustice; for the triviality of its investigations of fact; for the savageness of its censures; for the wild and wanton opinions broached in its pages; for the infatuation of mind manifested in some of its arguments; and for the lamentable circumstance that it exhibited a far greater debt in mental culture to Mr. John Stuart Mill than to the whole range of Christian divines. In a sentence, Ward 'had launched on the great deep of human controversy as frail a bark as ever carried sail,' and his reviewer undoubtedly let loose upon it as shrewd a blast as ever blew from the Æolian wallet. The article was meant for the *Quarterly Review*, and it is easy to imagine the dire perplexities of Lockhart's editorial mind in times so fervid and so distracted. The practical issue after all was not the merits or the demerits of Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, nor the real meaning of Hooker, Jewel, Bull, but simply what was to be done to Ward. Lockhart wrote to Murray

[1] It was in the midst of these laborious employments that Mr. Gladstone published a prayer-book, compiled for family use, from the anglican liturgy. An edition of two thousand copies went off at once, and was followed by many editions more.

that he had very seriously studied the article and studied Ward's book, and not only these, but also the Articles and the canons of the church, and he could not approve of the *Review* committing itself to a judgment on the line proper to be taken by the authorities of church and university, and the expression of such a judgment he suspected to be Mr. Gladstone's main object in writing. Mr. Gladstone, describing himself most truly as 'one of those soldiers who do not know when they are beat,' saw his editor; declared that what he sought was three things, first, that the process of mobbing out by invective and private interpretations is bad and should be stopped; second, that the church of England does not make assent to the proceedings of the Reformation a term of communion; and third, that before even judicial proceedings in one direction, due consideration should be had of what judicial proceedings in another direction consistency might entail, if that game were once begun. As Ward himself had virtually put it, 'Show me how any of the recognised parties in the church can subscribe in a natural sense, before you condemn me for subscribing in a non-natural.'[1] The end was a concordat between editor and contributor, followed by an immense amount of irksome revision, mutilation, and re-revision, reducing the argument in some places 'almost to tatters'; but the writer was in the long run satisfied that things were left standing in it which it was well to plant in a periodical like the *Quarterly Review*.

We have a glimpse of the passionate agitation into which this great controversy, partly theologic, partly moral, threw Mr. Gladstone: —

*Feb.* 6. — Breakfast at Mr. Macaulay's. Conversation chiefly on Aristotle's politics and on the Oxford proceedings. I grew hot, for which *ignoscat Deus*. *Feb.* 13. — Oxford 1–5. We were in the theatre. Ward was like himself, honest to a fault, as little like an advocate in his line of argument as well could be, and strained his theology even a point further than before. The forms are venerable, the sight imposing; the act is fearful [the degradation of Ward], if it did not leave strong hope of its revisal by law.

[1] *William George Ward*, p. 332.

BOOK II.

1845.

To Dr. Pusey he writes (Feb. 7): —

Indignation at this proposal to treat Mr. Newman worse than a dog really makes me mistrust my judgment, as I suppose one should always do when any proposal seeming to present an aspect of incredible wickedness is advanced. *Feb.* 17. — I concur with my whole heart and soul in the desire for repose; and I fully believe that the gift of an interval of reflection is that which would be of all gifts the most precious to us all, which would restore the faculty of deliberation now almost lost in storms, and would afford the best hope both of the development of the soundest elements that are in motion amongst us, and of the mitigation or absorption of those which are more dangerous.

In the proceedings at Oxford against Ward (February 13, 1845), Mr. Gladstone voted in the minority both against the condemnation of the book, and against the proposal to strip its writer of his university degree. He held that the censure combined condemnation of opinions with a declaration of personal dishonesty, and the latter question he held to be one 'not fit for the adjudication of a human tribunal.'

All this has a marked place in Mr. Gladstone's mental progress. Though primarily and ostensibly the concern of the established church, yet the series of proceedings that had begun with the attack on Hampden in 1836, and then were followed down to our own day by academical, ecclesiastical and legal censures and penalties, or attempts at censure and penalty, on Newman, Pusey, Maurice, Gorham, *Essays and Reviews*, Colenso, and ended, if they have yet ended, in a host of judgments affecting minor personages almost as good as nameless — all constitute a chapter of extraordinary importance in the general history of English toleration, extending in its consequences far beyond the pale of the communion immediately concerned. It was a long and painful journey, often unedifying, not seldom squalid, with crooked turns not a few, and before it was over, casting men into strange companionship upon bleak and hazardous shores. Mr. Gladstone, though he probably was not one of those who are as if born by nature tolerant, was soon drawn by circumstance to look

with favour upon that particular sort of toleration which arose out of the need for comprehension. When the six doctors condemned Pusey (June 1843) for preaching heresy and punished him by suspension, Mr. Gladstone was one of those who signed a vigorous protest against a verdict and a sentence passed upon an offender without hearing him and without stating reasons. This was at least the good beginning of an education in liberal rudiments.

III

In October 1845 the earthquake came. Newman was received into the Roman communion. Of this step Mr. Gladstone said that it has never yet been estimated at anything like the full amount of its calamitous importance. The leader who had wielded a magician's power in Oxford was followed by a host of other converts. More than once I have heard Mr. Gladstone tell the story how about this time he sought from Manning an answer to the question that sorely perplexed him: what was the common bond of union that led men of intellect so different, of character so opposite, of such various circumstance, to come to the same conclusion. Manning's answer was slow and deliberate: '*Their common bond is their want of truth.*' 'I was surprised beyond measure,' Mr. Gladstone would proceed, 'and startled at his judgment.'[1]

Most ordinary churchmen remained where they were. An erastian statesman of our own time, when alarmists ran to him with the news that a couple of noblemen and their wives had just gone over to Rome, replied with calm, 'Show me a couple of grocers and their wives who have gone over, then you will frighten me.' The great body of church people stood firm, and so did Pusey, Keble, Gladstone, and so too, for half a dozen years to come, did his two closest friends, Manning and Hope. The dominant note in Mr. Gladstone's mind was clear and it was constant. As he put it to Manning (August 1, 1845),—'That one should entertain love for the church of Rome in respect of her virtues and her glories, is of course right and obligatory; but one is equally

[1] The story is told in Purcell, *Manning*, i. p. 318.

BOOK II. 1845.

bound under the circumstances of the English church in direct antagonism with Rome to keep clearly in view their very fearful opposites.'

Tidings of the great secession happened to find Mr. Gladstone in a rather singular atmosphere. In the course of 1842, to the keen distress of her relatives, his sister had joined the Roman church, and her somewhat peculiar nature led to difficulties that taxed patience and resource to the uttermost. She had feelings of warm attachment to her brother, and spoke strongly in that sense to Dr. Wiseman; and it was for the purpose of carrying out some plans of his father's for her advantage, that in the autumn of 1845 (September 24–November 18), Mr. Gladstone passed nearly a couple of months in Germany. The duty was heavy and dismal, but the journey brought him into a society that could not be without effect upon his impressionable mind. At Munich he laid the foundation of one of the most interesting and cherished friendships of his life. Hope-Scott had already made the acquaintance of Dr. Döllinger, and he now begged Mr. Gladstone on no account to fail to present himself to him, as well as to other learned and political men, 'good catholics and good men with no ordinary talent and information.' 'Nothing,' Mr. Gladstone once wrote in after years, 'ever so much made me anglican *versus* Roman as reading in Döllinger over forty years ago the history of the fourth century and Athanasius *contra mundum*.' Here is his story to his wife: —

*Munich, Sept.* 30, 1845. — Yesterday evening after dinner with two travelling companions, an Italian *negoziante* and a German, I must needs go and have a shilling's worth of the Augsburg Opera, where we heard Mozart (*Don Juan*) *well* played and very respectably sung. To-day I have spent my evening differently, in tea and infinite conversation with Dr. Döllinger, who is one of the first among the Roman catholic theologians of Germany, a remarkable and a very pleasing man. His manners have great simplicity and I am astonished at the way in which a busy student such as he is can receive an intruder. His appearance is, singular to say, just compounded of those of two men who are among the

most striking in appearance of our clergy, Newman and Dr. Mill. He surprises me by the extent of his information and the way in which he knows the details of what takes place in England. Most of our conversation related to it. He seemed to me one of the most liberal and catholic in mind of all the persons of his communion whom I have known. To-morrow I am to have tea with him again, and there is to be a third, Dr. Görres, who is a man of eminence among them. Do not think he has designs upon me. Indeed he disarms my suspicions in that respect by what appears to me a great sincerity. . . .

*Oct.* 2. — On Tuesday after post I began to look about me; and though I have not seen all the sights of Munich I have certainly seen a great deal that is interesting in the way of art, and having spent a good deal of time in Dr. Döllinger's company, last night till one o'clock, I have lost my heart to him. What I like perhaps most, or what crowns other causes of liking towards him, is that he, like Rio, seems to take hearty interest in the progress of religion in the church of England, apart from the (so to speak) party question between us, and to have a mind to appreciate good wherever he can find it. For instance, when in speaking of Wesley I said that his own views and intuitions were not heretical, and that if the ruling power in our church had had energy and a right mind to turn him to account, or if he had been in the church of Rome I was about to add, he would then have been a great saint, or something to that effect. But I hesitated, thinking it perhaps too strong, and even presumptuous, but he took me up and used the very words, declaring that to be his opinion. Again, speaking of Archbishop Leighton he expressed great admiration of his piety, and said it was so striking that he could not have been a real Calvinist. He is a great admirer of England and English character, and he does not at all *slur* over the mischief with which religion has to contend in Germany. Lastly, I may be wrong, but I am persuaded he in his mind abhors a great deal that is too frequently taught in the church of Rome. Last night he spoke with such a sentiment of the doctrine that was taught on the subject of indulgences which moved Luther to resist them; and he said he believed it was true that the preachers represented to the people that by money payments they could procure the release

BOOK II. 1845.

of souls from purgatory. I told him that was exactly the doctrine I had heard preached in Messina, and he said a priest preaching so in Germany would be suspended by his bishop.

Last night he invited several of his friends whom I wanted to meet, to an entertainment which consisted first of weak tea, immediately followed by meat supper with beer and wine and sweets. For two hours was I there in the midst of five German professors, or four, and the editor of a paper, who held very interesting discussions; I could only follow them in part, and enter into them still less, as none of them (except Dr. D.) seemed to speak any tongue but their own with any freedom, but you would have been amused to see and hear them, and me in the midst. I never saw men who spoke together in a way to make one another inaudible as they did, always excepting Dr. Döllinger, who sat like Rogers, being as he is a much more refined man than the rest. But of the others I assure you always two, sometimes three, and once all four, were speaking at once, very loud, each not trying to force the attention of the others, but to be following the current of his own thoughts. One of them was Dr. Görres,[1] who in the time of Napoleon edited a journal that had a great effect in rousing Germany to arms. Unfortunately he spoke more *thickly* than any of them.[2]

At Baden-Baden (October 16) he made the acquaintance of Mrs. Craven, the wife of the secretary of the Stuttgart mission, and authoress of the *Récit d'une Sœur*. Some of the personages of that alluring book were of the company. 'I have drunk tea several times at her house, and have had two or three long conversations with them on matters of religion. They are excessively acute and also full of Christian sentiment. But they are much more difficult to make real way with than a professor of theology, because they are determined (what is vulgarly called) to go the whole hog, just as in England usually when you find a

[1] Joseph Görres, one of the most famous of European publicists and gazetteers between the two revolutionary epochs of 1789 and 1848. His journal was the *Rhine Mercury*, where the doctrine of a free and united Germany was preached (1814–16) with a force that made Napoleon call the newspaper a fifth great power. In times Görres became a vehement ultramontane.

[2] See Friedrich's *Life of Döllinger*, ii. pp. 222–226, for a letter from Döllinger to Mr. Gladstone after his visit, dated Nov. 15, 1845.

woman anti-popish in spirit, she will push the argument against them to all extremes.'

It was at the same time that he read Bunsen's book on the church. 'It is dismal,' he wrote home to Mrs. Gladstone, 'and I must write to him to say so as kindly as I can.' Bunsen would seem all the more dismal from the contrast with the spiritual graces of these catholic ladies, and the ripe thinking and massive learning of one who was still the great catholic doctor. At no time in Mr. Gladstone's letters to Manning or to Hope is there a single faltering accent in respect of Rome. The question is not for an instant, or in any of his moods, open. He never doubts nor wavers. None the less, these impressions of his German journey would rather confirm than weaken his theological faith within the boundaries of anglican form and institution. 'With my whole soul I am convinced,' he says to Manning (June 23, 1850), 'that if the Roman system is incapable of being powerfully modified in spirit, it never can be the instrument of the work of God among us; the faults and the virtues of England are alike against it.'

I need spend no time in pointing out how inevitably these new currents drew Mr. Gladstone away from the old moorings of his first book. Even in 1844 he had parted company with the high ecclesiastical principles of good tories like Sir Robert Inglis. Peel, to his great honour, in that year brought in what Macaulay truly called 'an honest, an excellent bill, introduced from none but the best and purest motives.' It arose from a judicial decision in what was known as the Lady Hewley case, and its object was nothing more revolutionary or latitudinarian than to apply to unitarian chapels the same principle of prescription that protected gentlemen in the peaceful enjoyment of their estates and their manor-houses. The equity of the thing was obvious. In 1779 parliament had relieved protestant dissenting ministers from the necessity of declaring their belief in certain church articles, including especially those affecting the doctrine of the Trinity. In 1813 parliament had repealed the act of William III. that made it blasphemy to deny that doctrine. This legislation rendered unitarian

BOOK II. 1844.

foundations legal, and the bill extended to unitarian congregations the same prescriptions as covered the titles of other voluntary bodies to their places of worship, their school-houses, and their burial-grounds. But what was thus a question of property was treated as if it were a question of divinity; 'bigotry sought aid from chicane,' and a tremendous clamour was raised by anglicans, wesleyans, presbyterians, not because they had an inch of *locus standi* in the business, but because unitarianism was scandalous heresy and sin. Follett made a masterly lawyer's speech, Sheil the speech of a glittering orator, guarding unitarians by the arguments that had (or perhaps I should say had not) guarded Irish catholics, Peel and Gladstone made political speeches lofty and sound, and Macaulay the speech of an eloquent scholar and a reasoner, manfully enforcing principles both of law and justice with a luxuriance of illustration all his own, from jurists of imperial Rome, sages of old Greece, Hindoos, Peruvians, Mexicans, and tribunals beyond the Mississippi.[1] We do not often enjoy such parliamentary nights in our time.

Mr. Gladstone supported the proposal on the broadest grounds of unrestricted private judgment:—

> I went into the subject laboriously, he says, and satisfied myself that this was not to be viewed as a mere quieting of titles based on lapse of time, but that the unitarians were the true lawful holders, because though they did not agree with the puritan opinions they adhered firmly to the puritan principle, which was that scripture was the rule without any binding interpretation, and that each man, or body, or generation must interpret for himself. This measure in some ways heightened my churchmanship, but depressed my church-and-statesmanship.

Far from feeling that there was any contrariety between his principles of religious belief and those on which legislation in their case ought to proceed, he said that the only use he could make of these principles was to apply them to the decisive performance of a great and important act, founded on the everlasting principles of truth and justice. Sheil,

[1] *Hansard*, June 6, 1844.

who followed Mr. Gladstone, made a decidedly striking observation. He declared how delighted he was to hear from such high authority that the bill was perfectly reconcilable with the strictest and the sternest principles of state conscience. 'I cannot doubt,' he continued, 'that the right hon. gentleman, the champion of free trade, will ere long become the advocate of the most unrestricted liberty of thought.' Time was to justify Sheil's acute prediction. Unquestionably the line of argument that suggested it was a great advance from the arguments of 1838, of which Macaulay had said that they would warrant the roasting of dissenters at slow fires.

IV

In this vast field of human interest what engaged and inflamed him was not in the main place that solicitude for personal salvation and sanctification, which under sharp stress of argument, of pious sensibility, of spiritual panic, now sent so many flocking into the Roman fold. It was at bottom more like the passion of the great popes and ecclesiastical master-builders, for strengthening and extending the institutions by which faith is spread, its lamps trimmed afresh, its purity secured. What wrung him with affliction was the laying waste of the heritage of the Lord. 'The promise,' he cried, 'indeed stands sure to the church and the elect. In the farthest distance there is peace, truth, glory; but what a leap to it, over what a gulf.' For himself, the old dilemma of his early years still tormented him. 'I wish,' he writes to Manning (March 8, 1846) good humouredly, 'I could get a synodical decision in favour of my retirement from public life. For, I profess to remain there (to myself) for the service of the church, and my views of the mode of serving her are getting so fearfully wide of those generally current, that even if they be sound, they may become wholly unavailable.' The question whether the service of the church can be most effectually performed in parliament was incessantly present to his mind. Manning pressed him in one direction, the inward voice drew him in the other. 'I could write down in a few lines,' he says to Manning, 'the

BOOK II. 1846.

measures, after the adoption of which I should be prepared to say to a young man entering life, If you wish to serve the church do it in the sanctuary, and not in parliament (unless he were otherwise determined by his station, and not always then; it must depend upon his inward vocation), and should not think it at all absurd to say the same thing to some who have already placed themselves in this latter sphere. For when the end is attained of letting "the church help herself," and when it is recognised that active help can no longer be given, the function of serving the church in the state, such as it was according to the old idea, dies of itself, and what remains of duty is of a character essentially different.' Then a pregnant passage: — 'It is the essential change now in progress from the catholic to the infidel idea of the state which is the determining element in my estimate of this matter, and which has, I think, no place in yours. For I hold and believe that when that transition has once been effected, the state never can come back to the catholic idea by means of any agency from within itself: that, if at all, it must be by a sort of re-conversion from without. I am not of those (excellent as I think them) who say, Remain and bear witness for the truth. There is a place where witness is ever to be borne for truth, that is to say for full and absolute truth, but it is not there.'[1]

He reproaches himself with being 'actively engaged in carrying on a process of lowering the religious tone of the state, letting it down, demoralising it, and assisting in its transition into one which is mechanical.' The objects that warrant public life in one in whose case executive government must be an element, must be very special. True that in all probability the church will hold her nationality in substance beyond our day. 'I think she will hold it as long as the monarchy subsists.' So long the church will need parliamentary defence, but in what form? The dissenters had no members for universities, and yet their real representation was far better organised in proportion to its weight than the church, though formally not organised at all. 'Strength with the people will for our day at least be the

[1] To Manning, April 5, 1846.

only effectual defence of the church in the House of Commons, as the want of it is now our weakness there. It is not everything that calls itself a defence that is really such.'[1]

Manning expressed a strong fear, amounting almost to a belief, that the church of England must split asunder. 'Nothing can be firmer in my mind,' Mr. Gladstone replied (Aug. 31, 1846), 'than the opposite idea. She will live through her struggles, she has a great providential destiny before her. Recollect that for a century and a half, a much longer period than any for which puritan and catholic principles have been in conflict within the church of England, Jansenist and anti-Jansenist dwelt within the church of Rome with the unity of wolf and lamb. Their differences were not absorbed by the force of the church; they were in full vigour when the Revolution burst upon both. Then the breach between nation and church became so wide as to make the rivalries of the two church sections insignificant, and so to cause their fusion.' Later, he thinks that he finds a truer analogy between 'the superstition and idolatry that gnaws and corrodes' the life of the Roman church, and the puritanism that with at least as much countenance from authority abides in the English church. There are two systems, he says, in the English church vitally opposed to one another, and if they were equally developed they could not subsist together in the same sphere. If puritanical doctrines were the base of episcopal and collegiate teaching, then the church must either split or become heretical. As it is, the basis is on the whole anti-puritanic, and what we should call catholic. The conflict may go on as now, and with a progressive advance of the good principle against the bad one. 'That has been on the whole the course of things during our lifetime, and to judge from present signs it is the will of God that it should so continue.' (Dec. 7, 1846.)

The following to Mr. Phillimore sums up the case as he then believed it to stand (June 24, 1847):—

. . . The church is now in a condition in which her children may and must desire that she should keep her national position

[1] To Manning, April 19, 1846.

BOOK II. 1846.

and her civil and proprietary rights, and that she should by degrees obtain the means of extending and of strengthening herself, not only by covering a greater space, but by a more vigorous organisation. Her attaining to this state of higher health depends in no small degree upon progressive adaptations of her state and her laws to her ever enlarging exigencies; these depend upon the humour of the state, and the state cannot and will not be in good humour with her, if she insists upon its being in bad humour with all other communions.

It seems to me, therefore, that while in substance we should all strive to sustain her in her national position, we shall do well on her behalf to follow these rules: to part earlier, and more freely and cordially, than heretofore with such of her privileges, here and there, as may be more obnoxious than really valuable, and some such she has; and further, not to presume too much to give directions to the state as to its policy with respect to other religious bodies. . . . This is not political expediency as opposed to religious principle. Nothing did so much damage to religion as the obstinate adherence to a negative, repressive, and coercive course. For a century and more from the Revolution it brought us nothing but outwardly animosities and inwardly lethargy. The revival of a livelier sense of duty and of God is now beginning to tell in the altered policy of the church. . . . As her sense of her spiritual work rises, she is becoming less eager to assert her exclusive claim, leaving that to the state as a matter for itself to decide; and she also begins to forego more readily, but cautiously, her external prerogatives.

# Book III

*1847–1852*

## CHAPTER I

### MEMBER FOR OXFORD

(*1847*)

THERE is not a feature or a point in the national character which has made England great among the nations of the world, that is not strongly developed and plainly traceable in our universities. For eight hundred or a thousand years they have been intimately associated with everything that has concerned the highest interests of the country. — GLADSTONE.



IN 1847 the fortunes of a general election brought Mr. Gladstone into relations that for many years to come deeply affected his political course. As a planet's orbit has puzzled astronomers until they discover the secret of its irregularities in the attraction of an unseen and unsuspected neighbour in the firmament, so some devious motions of this great luminary of ours were perturbations due in fact to the influence of his new constituency. As we have seen, Mr. Gladstone quitted Newark when he entered the cabinet to repeal the corn law. At the end of 1846, writing to Lord Lyttelton from Fasque, he tells him: 'I wish to be in parliament but coldly; feeling at the same time that I ought to wish it warmly on many grounds. But my father is so very keen in his protective opinions, and I am so very decidedly of the other way of thinking, that I look forward with some reluctance and regret to what must, when it happens, place me in marked and public contrast with him.' The thing soon happened.

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I remained, he says, without a seat until the dissolution in June 1847. But several months before this occurred it had become known that Mr. Estcourt would vacate his seat for Oxford, and I became a candidate. It was a serious campaign. The constituency, much to its honour, did not stoop to fight the battle on the ground of protection. But it was fought, and that fiercely, on religious grounds. There was an incessant discussion, and I may say dissection, of my character and position in reference to the Oxford movement. This cut very deep, for it was a discussion which each member of the constituency was entitled to carry on for himself. The upshot was favourable. The liberals supported me gallantly, so did many zealous churchmen, apart from politics, and a good number of moderate men, so that I was returned by a fair majority. I held the seat for eighteen years, but with five contests and a final defeat.

The other sitting member after the retirement of Mr. Estcourt was Sir Robert Harry Inglis, who had beaten Peel by a very narrow majority in the memorable contest for the university seat on the final crisis of the catholic question in 1829. He was blessed with a genial character and an open and happy demeanour; and the fact that he was equipped with a full store of sincere and inexorable prejudices made it easy for him to be the most upright, honourable, kindly, and consistent of political men. Repeal of the Test acts, relief of the catholics, the Reform bill, relief of the Jews, reform of the Irish church, the grant to Maynooth, the repeal of the corn laws — one after another he had stoutly resisted the whole catalogue of revolutionising change. So manful a record made his seat safe. In the struggle for the second seat, Mr. Gladstone's friends encountered first Mr. Cardwell, a colleague of his as secretary of the treasury in the late government. Cardwell was deep in the confidence and regard of Sir Robert Peel, and he earned in after years the reputation of an honest and most capable administrator; but in these earlier days the ill-natured called him Peel-and-water, others labelled him latitudinarian and indifferent, and though he had the support of Peel, promised before Mr. Gladstone's name as candidate was announced, he thought

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it wise at a pretty early hour to withdraw from a triangular fight. The old high-and-dry party and the evangelical party combined to bring out Mr. Round. If he had achieved no sort of distinction, Mr. Round had at least given no offence: above all, he had kept clear of all those tractarian innovations which had been finally stamped with the censure of the university two years before.

Charles Wordsworth, his old tutor and now warden of Glenalmond, found it hard to give Mr. Gladstone his support, because he himself held to the high principle of state conscience, while the candidate seemed more than ever bent on the rival doctrine of social justice. Mr. Hallam joined his committee, and what that learned veteran's adhesion was in influence among older men, that of Arthur Clough was among the younger. Northcote described Clough to Mr. Gladstone as a very favourable specimen of a class, growing in numbers and importance among the younger Oxford men, a friend of Carlyle's, Frank Newman's, and others of that stamp; well read in German literature and an admirer of German intellect, but also a still deeper admirer of Dante; just now busily taking all his opinions to pieces and not beginning to put them together again; but so earnest and good that he might be trusted to work them into something better than his friends inclined to fear. Ruskin, again, who had the year before published the memorable second volume of his *Modern Painters* (he was still well under thirty), was on the right side, and the Oxford chairman is sure that Mr. Gladstone will appreciate at its full value the support of such high personal merit and extraordinary natural genius. Scott, the learned Grecian who had been beaten along with Mr. Gladstone in the contest for the Ireland scholarship seventeen years before, wrote to him: — 'Ever since the time when you and I received Strypes at the hand of the vice-chancellor, and so you became my

'ὁμομαστιγίας
λαβὼν ἀγῶνος τὰς ἴσας πληγὰς ἐμοὶ,'[1]

[1] *Frogs*, 756; the second line is Scott's own. An Aristophanic friend translates: —

'Good brother-rogue, we've shared the selfsame beating:
At least, we carried off one Strype apiece.'

Strype was the book given to Scott and Gladstone as being good seconds to the winner of the Ireland. See above p. 61.

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I have looked forward to your being the representative of the university.' Richard Greswell of Worcester was the faithful chairman of his Oxford committee now and to the end, eighteen years off. He had reached the dignity of a bachelor of divinity, but nearly all the rest were no more than junior masters.

Routh, the old president of Magdalen, declined to vote for him on the well-established ground that Christ Church had no business to hold both seats. Mr. Gladstone at once met this by the dexterous proposition that though Christ Church was not entitled to elect him against the wish of the other colleges, yet the other colleges were entitled to elect him if they liked, by giving him a majority not made up of Christ Church votes. His eldest brother had written to tell him in terms of affectionate regret, that he could take no part in the election ; mere political differences would be secondary, but in the case of a university, religion came first, and there it was impossible to separate a candidate from his religious opinions. When the time came, however, partly under strong pressure from Sir John, Thomas Gladstone took a more lenient view and gave his brother a vote.

The Round men pointed triumphantly to their hero's votes on Maynooth and on the Dissenters' Chapels bill, and insisted on the urgency of upholding the principles of the united church of England and Ireland in their full integrity. The backers of Mr. Gladstone retorted by recalling their champion's career ; how in 1834 he first made himself known by his resistance to the admission of dissenters to the universities ; how in 1841 he threw himself into the first general move for the increase of the colonial episcopate, which had resulted in the erection of eleven new sees in six years ; how zealously with energy and money he had laboured for a college training for the episcopalian clergy in Scotland ; how instrumental he was in 1846, during the few months for which he held the seals of secretary of state, in erecting four colonial bishoprics ; how the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, through the mouth of the Archbishop of Canterbury himself, had thanked him for his services ; how long he had been an active supporter of the

great societies for the spread of church principles, the propagation of church doctrines, and the erection of church fabrics. As for the Dissenters' Chapels bill, it was an act of simple justice and involved no principles at issue between the church and dissent, and Mr. Gladstone's masterly exposition of the tendency of dissent to drop one by one all the vital truths of Christianity was proclaimed to be a real service to the church. The reader will thus see the lie of the land, what it meant to be member for a university, and why Mr. Gladstone thought the seat the highest of electoral prizes.

A circular was issued impugning his position on protestant grounds. 'I humbly trust,' wrote Mr. Gladstone in reply (July 26), 'that its writers are not justified in exhibiting me to the world as a person otherwise than heartily devoted to the doctrine and constitution of our reformed church. But I will never consent to adopt as the test of such doctrine, a disposition to identify the great and noble cause of the church of England with the restraint of the civil rights of those who differ from her.' Much was made of Mr. Gladstone's refusal to vote for the degradation of Ward. People wrote to the newspapers that it was an admitted and notorious fact that a sister of Mr. Gladstone's under his own influence had gone over to the church of Rome.[1] The fable was retracted, but at once revived in the still grosser untruth, that he habitually employed 'a Jesuitical system of argument' to show that nobody need leave the church of England, 'because all might be had there that was to be enjoyed in the church of Rome.' Maurice published a letter to a London clergyman vigorously remonstrating against the bigoted spirit that this election was warming into life, and fervently protesting against making a belief in the Nicene creed into the same thing as an opinion about a certain way of treating the property of unitarians. 'One artifice of this kind,' said Maurice, 'has been practised in this election which it makes me blush to speak of. Mr. Ward called the reformation a vile and accursed thing; Mr. Gladstone voted against a certain measure for the condemnation of Mr. Ward; therefore he spoke of the

[1] *Standard*, May 29, 1847.

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reformation as a vile and accursed thing. I should not have believed it possible that such a conclusion had been drawn from such premisses even by our religious press.'

The worthy Mr. Round, on the other hand, was almost impregnable. A diligent scrutiny at last dragged the dark fact to the light of day, that he had actually sat on Peel's election committee at the time of catholic emancipation in 1829, and had voted for him against Inglis. So it appears, said the mocking Gladstonians, that the protestant Mr. Round 'was willing to lend a helping hand to the first of a series of measures which are considered by his supporters as fraught with danger to the country's very best interests.' A still more sinister rumour was next bruited abroad: that Mr. Round attended a dissenting place of worship, and he was constrained to admit that, once in 1845 and thrice in 1846, he had been guilty of this blacksliding. The lost ground, however, was handsomely recovered by a public declaration that the very rare occasions on which he had been present at other modes of Christian worship had only confirmed his affection and reverential attachment to the services and formularies of his own church.

The nomination was duly made in the Sheldonian theatre (July 29), the scene of so many agitations in these fiery days. Inglis was proposed by a canon of Christ Church, Round by the master of Balliol, and Gladstone by Dr. Richards, the rector of Exeter. The prime claim advanced for him by his proposer, was his zeal for the English church in word and deed, above all his energy in securing that wherever the English church went, thither bishopries should go too. Besides all this, his master work, he had found time to spare not only for public business of the commonwealth, but for the study of theology, philosophy, and the arts.[1]

[1] The proposer's Latin is succinct, and may be worth giving for its academic flavour: — 'Jam inde a pueritia literarum studio imbutus, et in celeberrimo Etonensi gymnasio informatus, ad nostram accessit academiam, ubi morum honestate, pietate, et pudore nemini æqualium secundus, indole et ingenio facile omnibus antecellebat. Summis deinde nostræ academiæ honoribus cumulatus ad res civiles cum magnâ omnium expectatione se contulit; expectatione tamen major omni evasit. In senatûs enim domum inferiorem cooptatus, eam ad negotia tractanda habilitatem, et ingenii perspicacitatem exhibebat, ut reipublicæ administrationis particeps et adjutor adhuc adolescens fieret. Quantum

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Then the voting began. The Gladstonians went into the battle with 1100 promises. Northcote,[1] passing vigilant days in the convocation house, sent daily reports to Mr. Gladstone at Fasque. Peel went up to vote for him (splitting for Inglis); Ashley went up to vote against him. At the close of the second day things looked well, but there was no ground for over-confidence. Inglis was six hundred ahead of Gladstone, and Gladstone only a hundred and twenty ahead of Round. The next day Round fell a little more behind, and when the end came (August 3) the figures stood :— Inglis 1700, Gladstone 997, Round 824, giving Gladstone a majority of 173 over his competitor.

Numbers were not the only important point. When the poll came to be analysed by eager statisticians, the decision of the electors was found to have a weight not measured by an extra hundred and seventy votes. For example, Mr. Gladstone had among his supporters twenty-five double-firsts against seven for Round, and of single first-classes he had one hundred and fifty-seven against Round's sixty-six. Of Ireland and Hertford scholars Mr. Gladstone had nine to two and three to one respectively; and of chancellor's prizemen who voted he had forty-five against twelve. Of fellows of colleges he had two hundred and eighteen against one hundred and twenty-eight, and his

erga ecclesiam Anglicanam ejus studium non verba, sed facta, testentur. Is enim erat qui inter primos et perpaucos summo labore et eloquentiâ contendebat, ut ubicunque orbis terrarum ecclesia Anglicana pervenisset, episcopatus quoque eveheretur. Et quamdiu e secretis Reginæ fuit, ecclesia Anglicana apud colonos nostros plurimis locis labefactam suâ ope stabilivit, et patrocinium ejus suscepit. Neque vero publicis negotiis adeo se dedit quin theologiæ, philosophiæ, artium studio vacaret. Quæ cum ita sint, si delegatum, Academici, cooptare velimus, qui cum omni laude idem nostris rebus decus et tutamen sit, et qui summa eloquentiæ et argumenti vi, jura et libertates nostras tueri queat, hunc hodie suffragiis nostris comprobemus.'

[1] Stafford Northcote had been private secretary to Mr. Gladstone at the board of trade. On the appointment of his first private secretary, Mr. Rawson, to a post in Canada in 1842, Mr. Gladstone applied to Coleridge of Eton to recommend a successor. He suggested three names, Farrer, afterwards Lord Farrer, Northcote, and Pocock. Northcote, who looked to a political career, was chosen. 'Mr. Gladstone,' he wrote to a friend, June 30, 1842, 'is the man of all others among the statesmen of the present day to whom I should desire to attach myself. . . . He is one whom I respect beyond measure; he stands almost alone as representative of principles with which I cordially agree; and as a man of business, and one who humanly speaking is sure to rise, he is pre-eminent.' — Lang's *Life of Lord Iddesleigh*, i. pp. 63–67.

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majority in this class was highest where the elections to fellowships were open. The heads of the colleges told a different tale. Of these, sixteen voted for Round and only four for Gladstone. This discrepancy it was that gave its significance to the victory. Sitting in the convocation house watching the last casual voters drop in at the rate of two or three an hour through the summer afternoon, the ever faithful Northcote wrote to Mr. Gladstone at Fasque: —

Since I have been here, the contest has seemed even more interesting than it did in London. The effect of the contest itself has apparently been good. It has brought together the younger men without distinction of party, and has supplied the elements of a very noble party which will now look to you as a leader. I think men of all kinds are prepared to trust you, and though each feels that you will probably differ from his set in some particulars, each seems disposed to waive objections for the sake of the general good he expects. . . .

The victory is not looked upon as 'Puseyite'; it is a victory of the masters over the Hebdomadal board, and as such a very important one. The Heads felt it their last chance, and are said to have expressed themselves accordingly. The provost of Queen's, who is among the dissatisfied supporters of Round, said the other day, 'He would rather be represented by an old woman than by a young man.' It is not as a Maynoothian that you are dreaded here, though they use the cry against you and though that is the country feeling, but as a possible reformer and a man who thinks. On the other hand, the young men exult, partly in the hope that you will do something for the university yourself, partly in the consciousness that they have shown the strength of the magisterial party by carrying you against the opposition of the Heads, and have proved their title to be considered an important element of the university. They do not seem yet to be sufficiently united to effect great things, but there is a large amount of ability and earnestness which only wants direction, and this contest has tended to unite them. 'Puseyism' seems rather to be a name of the past, though there are still Puseyites of importance. Marriott, Mozley, and Church appear to be regarded as leaders; but Church who is now abroad, is looked upon as something more, and I am

told may be considered on the whole the fairest exponent of the feelings of the place. Stanley, Jowett, Temple, and others are great names in what is nicknamed the Germanising party. Lake, and perhaps I should say Temple, hold an intermediate position between the two parties. . . . Whatever may have been the evils attendant on the Puseyite movement, and I believe they were neither few nor small, it has been productive of great results; and it is not a little satisfactory to see how its distinctive features are dying away and the spirit surviving, instead of the spirit departing and leaving a great sham behind it.

Of the many strange positions to which in his long and ardent life Mr. Gladstone was brought, none is more startling than to find him, as in this curious moment at Oxford, the common rallying-point of two violently antagonistic sections of opinion. Dr. Pusey supported him; Stanley and Jowett supported him. The old school who looked on Oxford as the ancient and peculiar inheritance of the church were zealous for him; the new school who deemed the university an organ not of the church but of the nation, eagerly took him for their champion. A great ecclesiastical movement, reviving authority and tradition, had ended in complete academic repulse in 1845. It was now to be followed by an anti-ecclesiastical movement, critical, sceptical, liberal, scornful of authority, doubtful of tradition. Yet both the receding force and the rising force united to swell the stream that bore Mr. Gladstone to triumph at the poll. The fusion did not last. The two bands speedily drew off into their rival camps, to arm themselves in the new conflict for mastery between obscurantism and illumination. The victor was left with his laurels in what too soon proved to be, after all, a vexed and precarious situation, that he could neither hold with freedom nor quit with honour.

Meanwhile he thoroughly enjoyed his much coveted distinction: —

*To Mrs. Gladstone.*

*Exeter Coll., Nov.* 2, 1847. — This morning in company with Sir R. Inglis, and under the protection or chaperonage of the dean, I have made the formal circuit of visits to all the heads of houses

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and all the common-rooms. It has gone off very well. There was but one reception by a head (Corpus) that was not decidedly *kind*, and that was only a little cold. Marsham (Merton), who is a frank, warm man, keenly opposed, said very fairly, to Inglis, 'I congratulate you warmly'; and then to me, 'And I would be very glad to do the same to you, Mr. Gladstone, if I could think you would do the same as Sir R. Inglis.' I like a man for this. They say the dean should have asked me to dine to-day, but I think he may be, and perhaps wisely, afraid of recognising me in any very marked way, for fear of endangering the old Christ Church right to one seat which it is his peculiar duty to guard.

We dined yesterday in the hall at Christ Church, it being a grand day there. Rather unfortunately the undergraduates chose to make a row in honour of me during dinner, which the two censors had to run all down the hall to stop. This had better not be talked about. Thursday the warden of All Souls' has asked me and I *think* I must accept; had it not been a head (and it is one of the little party of four who voted for me) I should not have doubted, but at once have declined.

HAWARDEN CASTLE.

## CHAPTER II

### THE HAWARDEN ESTATE

(*1847*)

> It is no Baseness for the Greatest to descend and looke into their owne Estate. Some forbeare it, not upon Negligence alone, But doubting to bring themselves into Melancholy in respect they shall finde it Broken. But wounds cannot be cured without Searching. Hee that cleareth by Degrees induceth a habit of Frugalitie, and gaineth as well upon his Minde, as upon his Estate.—Bacon.



I must here pause for material affairs of money and business, with which, as a rule, in the case of its heroes the public is considered to have little concern. They can no more be altogether omitted here than the bills, acceptances, renewals, notes of hand, and all the other financial apparatus of his printers and publishers can be left out of the story of Sir Walter Scott. Not many pages will be needed, though this brevity will give the reader little idea of the pre-occupations with which they beset a not inconsiderable proportion of Mr. Gladstone's days. A few sentences in a biography many a time mean long chapters in a life, and what looked like an incident turns out to be an epoch.

Sir Stephen Glynne possessed a small property in Staffordshire of something less than a hundred acres of land, named the Oak Farm, near Stourbridge, and under these acres were valuable seams of coal and ironstone. For this he refused an offer of five-and-thirty thousand pounds in 1835, and under the advice of an energetic and sanguine agent proceeded to its rapid development. On the double marriage in 1839, Sir Stephen associated his two brothers-in-law with himself to the modest extent of one-tenth share each in an enterprise that seemed of high prospective value. Their interests were acquired through their wives, and it is to be presumed that

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they had no opportunity of making a personal examination of the concern. The adventurous agent, now manager-in-chief of the business, rapidly extended operations, setting up furnaces, forges, rolling-mills, and all the machinery for producing tools and hardware for which he foresaw a roaring foreign market. The agent's confidence and enthusiasm mastered his principal, and large capital was raised solely on the security of the Hawarden fortune and credit. Whether Oak Farm was irrationally inflated or not, we cannot say, though the impression is that it had the material of a sound property if carefully worked; but it was evidently pushed in excess of its realisable capital. The whole basis of its credit was the Hawarden estate, and a forced stoppage of Oak Farm would be the death-blow to Hawarden. As early as 1844 clouds rose on the horizon. The position of Sir Stephen Glynne had become seriously compromised, while under the system of unlimited partnership the liability of his two brothers-in-law extended in proportion. In 1845 the three brothers-in-law by agreement retired, each retaining an equitable mortgage on the concern. Two years later, one of our historic panics shook the money-market, and in its course brought down Oak Farm.[1] A great accountant reported, a meeting was held at Freshfield's, the company was found hopelessly insolvent, and it was determined to wind up. The court directed a sale. In April 1849, at Birmingham, Mr. Gladstone purchased the concern on behalf of himself and his two brothers-in-law, subject to certain existing interests; and in May Sir Stephen Glynne resumed legal possession of the wreck of Oak Farm. The burden on Hawarden was over £250,000, leaving its owner with no margin to live upon.

Into this far-spreading entanglement Mr. Gladstone for several years threw himself with the whole weight of his untiring tenacity and force. He plunged into masses of accounts, mastered the coil of interests and parties, studied legal intricacies, did daily battle with human unreason, and year after year carried on a voluminous correspondence.

[1] For an account of the creditors' meeting held at Birmingham on Dec. 2, 1847, see the *Times* of Dec. 3, 1847.

There are a hundred and forty of his letters to Mr. Freshfield on Oak Farm alone. Let us note in passing what is, I think, a not unimportant biographic fact. These circumstances brought him into close and responsible contact with a side of the material interests of the country that was new to him. At home he had been bred in the atmosphere of commerce. At the board of trade, in the reform of the tariff, in connection with the Bank act and in the growth of the railway system, he had been well trained in high economics. Now he came to serve an arduous apprenticeship in the motions and machinery of industrial life. The labour was immense, prolonged, uncongenial; but it completed his knowledge of the customs, rules, maxims, and currents of trade and it bore good fruit in future days at the exchequer. He manfully and deliberately took up the burden as if the errors had been his own, and as if the financial sacrifice that he was called to make both now and later were matter of direct and inexorable obligation. These, indeed, are the things in life that test whether a man be made of gold or clay. 'The weight,' he writes to his father (June 16, 1849), 'of the private demands upon my mind has been such, since the Oak Farm broke down, as frequently to disqualify me for my duties in the House of Commons.' The load even tempted him, along with the working of other considerations, to think of total withdrawal from parliament and public life. Yet without a trace of the frozen stoicism or cynical apathy that sometimes passes muster for true resignation, he kept himself nobly free from vexation, murmur, repining, and complaint. Here is a moving passage from a letter of the time to Mrs. Gladstone: —

*Fasque, Jan.* 20, 1849. — Do not suppose for a moment that if I could by waving my hand strike out for ever from my cares and occupations those which relate to the Oak Farm and Stephen's affairs, I would do so; I have never felt that, have never asked it; and if my language seems to look that way, it is the mere impatience of weakness comforting itself by finding a vent. It has evidently come to me by the ordinance of God; and I am rather frightened to think how light my lot would be, were it removed,

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so light that something else would surely come in its place. I do not confound it with visitations and afflictions; it is merely a drain on strength and a peculiar one, because it asks for a kind of strength and skill and habits which I have not, but it falls altogether short of the category of high trials. Least of all suppose that the subject can ever associate itself painfully with the idea of you. No persons who have been in contact with it can be so absolutely blameless as you and Mary, nor can *our* relation together be rendered in the very smallest degree less or more a blessing by the addition or the subtraction of worldly wealth. I have abundant comfort *now* in the thought that at any rate I am the means of keeping a load off the minds of others; and I shall have much more hereafter when Stephen is brought through, and once more firmly planted in the place of his fathers, provided I can conscientiously feel that the restoration of his affairs has at any rate not been impeded by indolence, obstinacy, or blunders on my part. Nor can anything be more generous than the confidence placed in me by all concerned. Indeed, I can only regret that it is too free and absolute.

I may as well now tell the story to the end, though in anticipation of remote dates, for in truth it held a marked place in Mr. Gladstone's whole life, and made a standing background amid the vast throng of varying interests and transient commotions of his great career. Here is his own narrative as told in a letter written to his eldest son for a definite purpose in 1885:—

*To W. H. Gladstone.*

*Hawarden, Oct.* 3, 1885.—Down to the latter part of that year (1847), your uncle Stephen was regarded by all as a wealthy country gentleman with say £10,000 a year or more (subject, however, to his mother's jointure) to spend, and great prospects from iron in a Midland estate. In the bank crisis of that year the whole truth was revealed; and it came out that his agent at the Oak Farm (and formerly also at Hawarden) had involved him to the extent of £250,000; to say nothing of minor blows to your uncle Lyttelton and myself.

At a conversation in the library of 13 Carlton House Terrace, it

was considered whether Hawarden should be sold. Every obvious argument was in favour of it, for example the comparison between the income and the liabilities I have named. How was Lady Glynne's jointure (£2500) to be paid? How was Sir Stephen to be supported? There was *no* income, even less than none. Oak Farm, the iron property, was under lease to an insolvent company, and could not be relied on. Your grandfather, who had in some degree surveyed the state of affairs, thought the case was hopeless. But the family were unanimously set upon making any and every effort and sacrifice to avoid the necessity of sale. Mr. Barker, their lawyer, and Mr. Burnett, the land agent, entirely sympathised; and it was resolved to persevere. But the first effect was that Sir Stephen had to close the house (which it was hoped, but hoped in vain, to let); to give up carriages, horses, and I think for several years his personal servant; and to take an allowance of £700 a year out of which, I believe, he continued to pay the heavy subvention of the family to the schools of the parish, which was certainly counted by hundreds. Had the estate been sold, it was estimated that he would have come out a wealthy bachelor, possessed of from a hundred to a hundred and twenty thousands pounds free from all encumbrance but the jointure.

In order to give effect to the nearly hopeless resolution thus taken at the meeting in London, it was determined to clip the estate by selling £200,000 worth of land. Of this, nearly one-half was to be taken by your uncle Lyttelton and myself, in the proportion of about two parts for me and one for him. Neither of us had the power to buy this, but my father enabled me, and Lord Spencer took over his portion. The rest of the sales were effected, a number of fortunate secondary incidents occurred, and the great business of recovering and realising from the Oak Farm was laboriously set about.

Considerable relief was obtained by these and other measures. By 1852, there was a partial but perceptible improvement in the position. The house was reopened in a very quiet way by arrangement, and the allowance for Sir Stephen's expenditure was rather more than doubled. But there was nothing like ease for him until the purchase of the reversion was effected by me in 1865. I paid £57,000 for the bulk of the property, subject to debts not

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exceeding £150,000, and after the lives of the two brothers, the table value of which was, I think, twenty-two and a-half years. From this time your uncle had an income to spend of, I think, £2200, or not more than half what he probably would have had since 1847 had the estate been sold, which it would only have been through the grievous fault of others.

The full process of recovery was still incomplete, but the means of carrying it forward were now comparatively simple. Since the reversion came in, I have, as you know, forwarded that process; but it has been retarded by agricultural depression and by the disastrous condition through so many years of coal-mining; so that there still remains a considerable work to be done before the end can be attained, which I hope will never be lost sight of, namely, that of extinguishing the debt upon the property, though for family purposes the estate may still remain subject to charges in the way of annuity.

The full history of the Hawarden estate from 1847 would run to a volume. For some years after 1847, it and the Oak Farm supplied my principal employment[1]; but I was amply repaid by the value of it a little later on as a home, and by the unbroken domestic happiness there enjoyed. What I think you will see, as clearly resulting from this narrative, is the high obligation not only to keep the estate in the family, and as I trust in its natural course of descent, but to raise it to the best condition by thrift and care, and to promote by all reasonable means the aim of diminishing and finally extinguishing its debt.

This I found partly on a high estimate of the general duty to promote the permanence of families having estates in land, but very specially on the sacrifices made, through his remaining twenty-seven years of life, by your uncle Stephen, without a murmur, and with the concurrence of us all. . . .

Before closing I will repair one omission. When I concurred in the decision to struggle for the retention of Hawarden, I had not the least idea that my children would have an interest in the succession. In 1847 your uncle Stephen was only forty; your uncle Henry, at thirty-seven, was married, and had a child almost

[1] To Lord Lyttelton, July 29, 1874: 'I could not devote my entire life to it; and after 1852 my attention was only occasional.'

every year. It was not until 1865 that I had any title to look forward to your becoming at a future time the proprietor. — Ever your affectionate father.

The upshot is this, that Mr. Gladstone, with his father's consent and support, threw the bulk of his own fortune into the assets of Hawarden. By this, and the wise realisation of everything convertible to advantage, including, in 1865, the reversion after the lives of Sir Stephen Glynne and his brother, he succeeded in making what was left of Hawarden solvent. His own expenditure from first to last upon the Hawarden estate as now existing, he noted at £267,000. 'It has been for thirty-five years,' he wrote to W. H. Gladstone in 1882, '*i.e.*, since the breakdown in 1847, a great object of my life, in conjunction with your mother and your uncle Stephen, to keep the Hawarden estate together (or replace what was alienated), to keep it in the family, and to relieve it from debt with which it was ruinously loaded.'

In 1867 a settlement was made, to which Sir Stephen Glynne and his brother, and Mr. Gladstone and his wife, were the parties, by which the estate was conveyed in trust for one or more of the Gladstone children as Mr. Gladstone might appoint.[1] This was subject to a power of determining the settlement by either of the Glynne brothers, on repaying with interest the sum paid for the reversion. As the transaction touched matters in which he might be supposed liable to bias, Mr. Gladstone required that its terms should be referred to two men of perfect competence and probity — Lord Devon and Sir Robert Phillimore — for their judgment and approval. Phillimore visited Hawarden (August 19–26, 1865) to meet Lord Devon, and to confer with him upon Sir Stephen Glynne's affairs. Here are a couple of entries from his diary : —

*Aug.* 26. — The whole morning was occupied with the investigation of S. G.'s affairs by Lord Devon and myself. We examined

[1] This settlement followed the lines of a will made by Sir Stephen in 1855, devising the estate to his brother for life, with the remainder to his brother's sons in tail male ; and next to W. H. Gladstone and his sons in tail male, and then to W. E. Gladstone's other sons ; and in default of male issue of W. E. Gladstone, then to the eldest and other sons of Lord Lyttelton, and so forth in the ordinary form of an entailed estate.

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at some length the solicitor and the agent. Lord D. and I perfectly agreed in the opinion expressed in a memorandum signed by us both. Gladstone, as might have been expected, has behaved very well. *Sept.* 19 [*London*]. — Correspondence between Lyttelton and Gladstone, contained in Lord Devon's letter. Same subject as that which Lord D. and I came to consult upon at Hawarden. *Sept.* 24. — I wrote to Stephen Glynne to the effect that Henry entirely approved of the scheme agreed upon by Lord D. and myself, after a new consideration of all the circumstances, and after reading the Lyttelton-Gladstone correspondence. I showed Henry Glynne the letter, of which he entirely approved.

In 1874 the death of Sir Stephen Glynne, following that of his brother two years before, made Mr. Gladstone owner in possession of the Hawarden estate, under the transaction of 1865. With as little delay as possible (April 1875) he took the necessary steps to make his eldest son the owner in fee, and seven years after that (October 1882) he further transferred to the same son his own lands in the county, acquired by purchase, as we have seen, after the crash in 1847. By agreement, the possession and control of the castle and its contents remained with Mrs. Gladstone for life, as if she were taking a life-interest in it under settlement or will.

Although, therefore, for a few months the legal owner of the whole Hawarden estate, Mr. Gladstone divested himself of that quality as soon as he could, and at no time did he assume to be its master. The letters written by him on these matters to his son are both too interesting as the expression of his views on high articles of social policy, and too characteristic of his ideas of personal duty, for me to omit them here, though much out of their strict chronological place. The first is written after the death of Sir Stephen, and the falling in of the reversion: —

*To W. H. Gladstone.*

11 *Carlton House Terrace, April* 5, 1875. — There are several matters which I have to mention to you, and for which the present moment is suitable; while they embrace the future in several of its aspects.

CHAP. II.
Æt. 38.

1. I have given instructions to Messrs. Barker and Hignett to convert your life interest under the Hawarden settlement into a fee simple. Reflection and experience have brought me to favour this latter method of holding landed property as on the whole the best, though the arguments may not be all on one side. In the present case, they are to my mind entirely conclusive. First, because I am able thoroughly to repose in you an entire confidence as to your use of the estate during your lifetime, and your capacity to provide wisely for its future destination. Secondly, because you have, delivered over to you with the estate, the duty and office of progressively emancipating it from the once ruinous debt; and it is almost necessary towards the satisfactory prosecution of this purpose, which it may still take very many years to complete, that you should be entire master of the property, and should feel the full benefit of the steady care and attention which it ought to receive from you.

2. I hope that with it you will inherit the several conterminous properties belonging to me, and that you will receive these in such a condition as to enjoy a large proportion of the income they yield. Taking the two estates together, they form the most considerable estate in the county, and give what may be termed the first social position there. The importance of this position is enhanced by the large population which inhabits them. You will, I hope, familiarise your mind with this truth, that you can no more become the proprietor of such a body of property, or of the portion of it now accruing, than your brother Stephen could become rector of the parish, without recognising the serious moral and social responsibilities which belong to it. They are full of interest and rich in pleasure, but they demand (in the absence of special cause) residence on the spot, and a good share of time, and especially a free and ungrudging discharge of them. Nowhere in the world is the position of the landed proprietor so high as in this country, and this in great part for the reason that nowhere else is the possession of landed property so closely associated with definite duty.

3. In truth, with this and your seat in parliament, which I hope (whether Whitby supply it, or whether you migrate) will continue, you will, I trust, have a well-charged, though not an

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over-charged, life, and will, like professional and other thoroughly employed men, have to regard the bulk of your time as forestalled on behalf of duty, while a liberal residue may be available for your special pursuits and tastes, and for recreations. This is really the sound basis of life, which never can be honourable or satisfactory without adequate guarantees against frittering away, even in part, the precious gift of time.

While touching on the subject I would remind you of an old recommendation of mine, that you should choose some parliamentary branch or subject, to which to give special attention. The House of Commons has always heard your voice with pleasure, and ought not to be allowed to forget it. I say this the more freely, because I think it is, in your case, the virtue of a real modesty, which rather too much indisposes you to put yourself forward.

Yet another word. As years gather upon me, I naturally look forward to what is to be after I am gone; and although I should indeed be sorry to do or say anything having a tendency to force the action of your mind beyond its natural course, it will indeed be a great pleasure to me to see you well settled in life by marriage. Well settled, I feel confident, you will be, if settled at all. In your position at Hawarden, there would then be at once increased ease and increased attraction in the performance of your duties; nor can I overlook the fact that the life of the unmarried man, in this age particularly, is under peculiar and insidious temptations to selfishness, unless his celibacy arise from a very strong and definite course of self-devotion to the service of God and his fellow creatures.

The great and sad change of Hawarden [by the death of Sir Stephen] which has forced upon us the consideration of so many subjects, gave at the same time an opening for others, and it seemed to me to be best to put together the few remarks I had to make. I hope the announcement with which I began will show that I write in the spirit of confidence as well as of affection. It is on this footing that we have ever stood, and I trust ever shall stand. You have acted towards me at all times up to the standard of all I could desire. May you have the help of the Almighty to embrace as justly, and fulfil as cheerfully, the whole conception

of your duties in the position to which it has pleased Him to call you, and which perhaps has come upon you with somewhat the effect of a surprise; that may, however, have the healthy influence of a stimulus to action, and a help towards excellence. Believe me ever, my dear son, your affectionate father.

In the second letter Mr. Gladstone informed W. H. Gladstone that he had at Chester that morning (Oct. 23, 1882), along with Mrs. Gladstone, executed the deeds that made his son the proprietor of Mr. Gladstone's lands in Flintshire, subject to the payment of annuities specified in the instrument of transfer; and he proceeds: —

I earnestly entreat that you will never, under any circumstances, mortgage any of your land. I consider that our law has offered to proprietors of land, under a narrow and mistaken notion of promoting their interests, dangerous facilities and inducements to this practice; and that its mischievous consequences have been so terribly felt (the word is strong, but hardly too strong) in the case of Hawarden, that they ought to operate powerfully as a warning for the future.

You are not the son of very wealthy parents; but the income of the estates (the Hawarden estates and mine jointly), with your prudence and diligence, will enable you to go steadily forward in the work I have had in hand, and after a time will in the course of nature give considerable means for the purpose.

I have much confidence in your prudence and intelligence; I have not the smallest fear that the rather unusual step I have taken will in any way weaken the happy union and harmony of our family; and I am sure you will always bear in mind the duties which attach to you as the head of those among whom you receive a preference, and as the landlord of a numerous tenantry, prepared to give you their confidence and affection.

A third letter on the same topics followed three years after, and contains a narrative of the Hawarden transactions already given in an earlier page of this chapter.

*To W. H. Gladstone.*

*Oct.* 3, 1885. — When you first made known to me that you thought of retiring from the general election of this year, I

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received the intimation with mixed feelings. The question of money no doubt deserves, under existing circumstances, to be kept in view; still I must think twice before regarding this as the conclusive question. I conceive the balance has to be struck mainly between these two things; on the one hand, the duty of persons connected with the proprietorship of considerable estates in land, to assume freely the burden and responsibility of serving in parliament. On the other hand, the peculiar position of this combined estate, which in the first place is of a nature to demand from the proprietor an unusual degree of care and supervision, and which in the second place has been hit severely by recent depressions in corn and coal, which may be termed its two pillars.

On the first point it may fairly be taken into view that in serving for twenty years you have stood four contested elections, a number I think decidedly beyond the average. . . . I will assume, for the present, that the election has passed without bringing you back to parliament. I should then consider that you had thus relieved yourself, at any rate for a period, from a serious call upon your time and mind, mainly with a view to the estate; and on this account, and because I have constituted you its legal master, I write this letter in order to place clearly before you some of the circumstances which invest your relation to it with a rather peculiar character.

I premise a few words of a general nature. An enemy to entails, principally though not exclusively on social and domestic grounds, I nevertheless regard it as a very high duty to labour for the conservation of estates, and the permanence of the families in possession of them, as a principal source of our social strength, and as a large part of true conservatism, from the time when Aeschylus wrote

ἀρχαιοπλούτων δεσποτῶν πολλὴ χάρις.[1]

But if their possession is to be prolonged by conduct, not by factitious arrangements, we must recognise this consequence, that conduct becomes subject to fresh demands and liabilities.

In condemning laws which tie up the *corpus*, I say nothing

[1] *Agam.* 1043, 'A great blessing are masters with ancient riches.'

against powers of charge, either by marriage settlement or otherwise, for wife and children, although questions of degree and circumstance may always have to be considered. But to mortgages I am greatly opposed. Whether they ought or ought not to be restrained by law, I do not now inquire. But I am confident that few and rare causes only will warrant them, and that as a general rule they are mischievous, and in many cases, as to their consequences, anti-social and immoral. Wherever they exist they ought to be looked upon as evils, which are to be warred upon and got rid of. One of our financial follies has been to give them encouragement by an excessively low tax; and one of the better effects of the income-tax is that it is a fine upon mortgaging.

# CHAPTER III

## PARTY EVOLUTION — NEW COLONIAL POLICY

*(1846–1850)*

> I SHALL ever thankfully rejoice to have lived in a period when so blessed a change in our colonial policy was brought about; a change which is full of promise and profit to a country having such claims on mankind as England, but also a change of system, in which we have done no more than make a transition from misfortune and from evil, back to the rules of justice, of reason, of nature, and of common sense. — GLADSTONE (1856).

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THE fall of Peel and the break up of the conservative party in 1846 led to a long train of public inconveniences. When Lord John Russell was forming his government, he saw Peel, and proposed to include any of his party. Peel thought such a junction under existing circumstances unadvisable, but said he should have no ground of complaint if Lord John made offers to any of his friends; and he should not attempt to influence them either way.[1] The action ended in a proposal of office to Dalhousie, Lincoln, and Sidney Herbert. Nothing came of it, and the whigs were left to go on as they best could upon the narrow base of their own party. The protectionists gave them to understand that before Bentinck and his friends made up their minds to turn Peel out, they had decided that it would not be fair to put the whigs in merely to punish the betrayer, and then to turn round upon them. On the contrary, fair and candid support was what they intended. The conservative government had carried liberal measures; the liberal government subsisted on conservative declarations. Such was this singular situation.

The Peelites, according to a memorandum of Mr. Glad-

[1] *The Halifax Papers.*

stone's, from a number approaching 120 in the corn law crisis of 1846, were reduced at once by the election of 1847 to less than half. This number, added to the liberal force, gave free trade a very large majority: added to the protectionists it just turned the balance in their favour. So long as Sir Robert Peel lived (down to June 1850) the entire body never voted with the protectionists. From the first a distinction arose among Peel's adherents that widened, as time went on, and led to a long series of doubts, perturbations, manœuvres. These perplexities lasted down to 1859, and they constitute a vital chapter in Mr. Gladstone's political story. The distinction was in the nature of political things. Many of those who had stood by Peel's side in the day of battle, and who still stood by him in the curious morrow that combined victorious policy with personal defeat, were in more or less latent sympathy with the severed protectionists in everything except protection.[1] Differing from these, says Mr. Gladstone, others of the Peelites 'whose opinions were more akin to those of the liberals, cherished, nevertheless, personal sympathies and lingering wishes which made them tardy, perhaps unduly tardy, in drawing towards that party. I think that this description applied in some degree to Mr. Sidney Herbert, and in the same or a greater degree to myself.'[2]

Shortly described, the Peelites were all free trade conservatives, drawn by under-currents, according to temperament, circumstances, and all the other things that turn the balance of men's opinions, to antipodean poles of the political compass. 'We have no party,' Mr. Gladstone tells his father in June 1849, 'no organisation, no whipper-in; and under these circumstances we cannot exercise any considerable degree of permanent influence as a body.' The leading sentiment that guided the proceedings of the whole body of Peelites alike was a desire to give to protection its final quietus. While the younger members of the Peel cabinet held that this could only be done in one way, namely, by

[1] Among them were such men as Wilson Patten, General Peel, Mr. Corry, Lord Stanhope, Lord Hardinge, most of whom in days to come took their places in conservative administrations.

[2] Memo. of 1876.

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forcing the protectionists into office where they must put their professions to the proof, Peel himself, and Graham with him, took a directly opposite view, and adopted as the leading principle of their action the vital necessity of keeping the protectionists out. This broad difference led to no diminution of personal intercourse or political attachment.

Certainly this was not due, says Mr. Gladstone, to any desire (at least in Sir R. Peel's mind) for, or contemplation of, coalition with the liberal party. It sprang entirely from a belief on his part that the chiefs of the protectionists would on their accession to power endeavour to establish a policy in accordance with the designation of their party, and would in so doing probably convulse the country. As long as Lord George Bentinck lived, with his iron will and strong convictions, this was a contingency that could not be overlooked. But he died in 1848, and with his death it became a visionary dream. Yet I remember well Sir Robert Peel saying to me, when I was endeavouring to stir him up on some great fault (as I thought it), in the colonial policy of the ministers, 'I foresee a tremendous struggle in this country for the restoration of protection.' He would sometimes even threaten us with the possibility of being 'sent for' if a crisis should occur, which was a thing far enough from our limited conceptions. We were flatly at issue with him on this opinion. We even considered that as long as the protectionists had no responsibilities but those of opposition, and as there were two hundred and fifty seats in parliament to be won by chanting the woes of the land and promising redress, there would be protectionists in plenty to fill the left hand benches on those terms.

The question what it was that finally converted the country to free trade is not easy to answer. Not the arguments of Cobden, for in the summer of 1845 even his buoyant spirit perceived that some precipitating event, and not reasoning, would decide. His appeals had become, as Disraeli wrote, both to nation and parliament a wearisome iteration, and he knew it. Those arguments, it is true, had laid the foundations of the case in all their solidity and breadth. But until the emergency in Ireland presented

itself, and until prosperity had justified the experiment, Peel was hardly wrong in reckoning on the possibility of a protectionist reaction. Even the new prosperity and contentment of the country were capable of being explained by the extraordinary employment found in the creation of railways. As Mr. Gladstone said to a correspondent in the autumn of 1846, 'The liberal proceedings of conservative governments, and the conservative proceedings of the new liberal administration, unite in pointing to the propriety of an abstinence from high-pitched opinions.' This was a euphemism. What it really meant was that outside of protection no high-pitched opinions on any other subject were available. The tenets of party throughout this embarrassed period from 1846 to 1852 were shifting, equivocal, and fluid. Nor even in the period that followed did they very rapidly consolidate.

Mr. Gladstone writes to his father (June 30, 1849): —

I will only add a few words about your desire that I should withdraw my confidence from Peel. My feelings of admiration, attachment, and gratitude to him I do not expect to lose; and I agree with Graham that he has done more and *suffered* more than any other living statesman for the good of the people. But still I must confess with sorrow that the present course of events tends to separate and disorganise the small troop of the late government and their adherents. On the West Indian question last year I, with others, spoke and voted against Peel. On the Navigation law this year I was saved from it only by the shipowners and their friends, who would not adopt a plan upon the basis I proposed. Upon Canada — a vital question — I again spoke and voted against him.[1] And upon other colonial questions, yet most important to the government, I fear even this year the same thing may happen again. However painful, then, it may be to me to differ from him, it is plain that my conduct is not placed in his hands to govern.

We find an illustration of the distractions of this long day

[1] A bill to indemnify the inhabitants of Lower Canada, many of whom had taken part in the rebellion of 1837–8, for the destruction and injury of their property. Mr. Gladstone strongly opposed any compensation being given to Canadian rebels. — *Hansard*, June 14, 1849.

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of party metamorphosis, as well as an example of what was regarded as Mr. Gladstone's over-ingenuity, in one among other passing divergences between him and his chief. Mr. Disraeli brought forward a motion (Feb. 19, 1850) of a very familiar kind, on the distress of the agricultural classes and the insecurity of relief of rural burdens. Bright bluntly denied that there was a case in which the fee of land had been depreciated or rent been permanently lowered. Graham said the mover's policy was simply a transfer of the entire poor rate to the consolidated fund, violating the principles of local control and inviting prodigal expenditure. Fortune then, in Mr. Disraeli's own language, sent him an unexpected champion, by whom, according to him, Graham was fairly unhorsed. The reader will hardly think so, for though the unexpected champion was Mr. Gladstone, he found no better reason for supporting the motion, than that its adoption would weaken the case for restoring protection. As if the landlords and farmers were likely to be satisfied with a small admission of a great claim, while all the rest of their claim was to be as bitterly contested as ever ; with the transfer of a shabby couple of millions from their own shoulders to the consolidated fund, when they were clamouring that fourteen millions would hardly be enough. Peel rose later, promptly took this plain point against his ingenious lieutenant, and then proceeded to one more of his elaborate defences, both of free trade and of his own motives and character. For the last time, as it was to happen, Peel declared that for Mr. Gladstone he had 'the greatest respect and admiration.' 'I was associated with him in the preparation and conduct of those measures, to the desire of maintaining which he partly attributes the conclusion at which he has arrived. I derived from him the most zealous, the most effective assistance, and it is no small consolation to me to hear from him, although in this particular motion we arrive at different conclusions, that his confidence in the justice of those principles for which we in common contended remains entirely unshaken.'[1]

On this particular battle, as well as on more general matter,

[1] *Hansard*, Feb. 21, 1850, p. 1233.

a letter from Mr. Gladstone to his wife (Feb. 22, 1850) sheds some light: —

*To Mrs. Gladstone.*

Indeed you do rise to very daring flights to-day, and suggest many things that flow from your own deep affection which, perhaps, disguises from you some things that are nevertheless real. I cannot form to myself any other conception of my duty in parliament except the simple one of acting independently, without faction, and without subserviency, on all questions as they arise. To the formation of a party, or even of the nucleus of a party, there are in my circumstances many obstacles. I have been talking over these matters with Manning this morning, and I found him to be of the opinion which is deliberately mine, namely, that it is better that I should not be the head or leader even of my own contemporaries; that there are others of them whose position is less embarrassed, and more favourable and powerful, particularly from birth or wealth or both. Three or four years ago, before I had much considered the matter, and while we still felt as if Peel were our actual chief in politics, I did not think so, but perhaps thought or assumed that as, up to the then present time, I had discharged some prominent duties in office and in parliament, the first place might naturally fall to me when the other men were no longer in the van. But since we have become more disorganised, and I have had little sense of union except with the men of my own standing, and I have *felt* more of the actual state of things, and how this or that would work in the House of Commons, I have come to be satisfied in my own mind that, if there were a question whether there should be a leader and who it should be, it would be much better that either Lincoln or Herbert should assume that post, whatever share of the mere work might fall on me. I have viewed the matter very drily, and so perhaps you will think I have written on it.

To turn then to what is more amusing, the battle of last night. After much consideration and conference with Herbert (who has had an attack of bilious fever and could not come down, though much better, and soon, I hope, to be out again, but who agreed with me), I determined that I ought to vote last night with

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Disraeli; and made up my mind accordingly, which involved saying why, at some period of the night. I was anxious to do it early, as I knew Graham would speak on the other side, and did not wish any conflict even of reasoning with him. But he found I was going to speak, and I suppose may have had some similar wish. At any rate, he had the opportunity of following Stafford who began the debate, as he was to take the other side. Then there was an amusing scene between him and Peel. Both rose and stood in competition for the Speaker's eye. The Speaker had seen Graham first, and he got it. But when he was speaking I felt I had no choice but to follow him. He made so very able a speech that this was no pleasant prospect; but I acquired the courage that proceeds from fear, according to a line from Ariosto: *Chi per virtù, chi per paura vale* [one from valour, another from fear, is strong], and made my plunge when he sat down. But the Speaker was not dreaming of me, and called a certain Mr. Scott who had risen at the same time. Upon this I sat down again, and there was a great uproar because the House always anticipating more or less interest when men speak on opposite sides and in succession, who are usually together, called for me. So I was up again, and the Speaker deserted Scott and called me, and I had to make the best I could after Graham. That is the end of the story, for there is nothing else worth saying. It was at the dinner hour from 7 to 7¾, and then I went home for a little quiet. Peel again replied upon me, but I did not hear that part of him; and Disraeli showed the marvellous talent that he has, for summing up with brilliancy, buoyancy, and comprehensiveness at the close of a debate. You have heard me speak of that talent before when I have been wholly against him; but never, last night or at any other time, would I go to him for conviction, but for the delight of the ear and the fancy. What a long story!

During the parliament that sat from 1847 to 1852, Mr. Gladstone's political life was in partial abeyance. The whole burden of conducting the affairs of the Hawarden estate fell upon him. For five years, he said, 'it constituted my daily and continuing care, while parliamentary action was only occasional. It supplied in fact my education for the office of finance minister.' The demands of church matters were

anxious and at times absorbing. He warmly favoured and spoke copiously for the repeal of the navigation laws. He desired, however, to accept a recent overture from America which offered everything, even their vast coasting trade, upon a footing of absolute reciprocity. 'I gave notice,' he says, 'of a motion to that effect. But the government declined to accept it. I accordingly withdrew it. At this the tories were much put about. I, who had thought of things only and not taken persons into view, was surprised at their surprise. It did not occur to me that by my public notification I had given to the opposition generally something *like* a vested interest in my proposal. I certainly should have done better never to have given my notice. This is one of the cases illustrating the extreme slowness of my political education.' The sentence about thinking of things only and leaving persons out, indicates a turn of mind that partly for great good, partly for some evil, never wholly disappeared.

Yet partially withdrawn as he was from active life in the House of Commons, Mr. Gladstone was far too acute an observer to have any leanings to the delusive self-indulgence of temporary retirements. To his intimate friend, Sir Walter James, who seems to have nursed some such intention, he wrote at this very time (Feb. 13, 1847) : —

> The way to make parliament profitable is to deal with it as a calling, and if it be a calling it can rarely be advantageous to suspend the pursuit of it for years together with an uncertainty, too, as to its resumption. You have not settled in the country, nor got your other vocation open and your line clear before you. The purchase of an estate is a very serious matter, which you may not be able to accomplish to your satisfaction except after the lapse of years. It would be more satisfactory to drop parliament with another path open to you already, than in order to seek about for one. . . . I think with you that the change in the position of the conservative party makes public life still more painful where it was painful before, and less enjoyable, where it was enjoyable; but I do not think it remains less a duty to work through the tornado and to influence for good according to our

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means the new forms into which political combination may be cast.

In 1848 Northcote speaks of Mr. Gladstone as the 'patron saint' of the coal-whippers, who, as a manifestation of their gratitude for the Act which he had induced parliament to pass for them, offered their services to put down the chartist mob. Both Mr. Gladstone and his brother John served as special constables during the troubled days of April. In his diary he records on April 10, 'On duty from 2 to $3\frac{3}{4}$ P.M.'

II

When Mr. Gladstone became colonial secretary at the end of 1845, he was described as a strong accession to the progressive or theorising section of the cabinet — the men, that is to say, who applied to the routine of government, as they found it, critical principles and improved ideals. If the church had been the first of Mr. Gladstone's commanding interests and free trade the second, the turn of the colonies came next. He had not held the seals of the colonial department for more than a few months, but to any business, whatever it might be, that happened to kindle his imagination or work on his reflection, he never failed to bend his whole strength. He had sat upon a committee in 1835–6 on native affairs at the Cape, and there he had come into full view of the costly and sanguinary nature of that important side of the colonial question. Molesworth mentions the 'prominent and valuable' part taken by him in the committee on Waste Lands (1836). He served on committees upon military expenditure in the colonies, and upon colonial accounts. He was a member of the important committee of 1840 on the colonisation of New Zealand, and voted in the minority for the draft report of the chairman, containing among other things the principle of the reservation of all unoccupied lands to the crown.[1] Between 1837 and 1841 he spoke frequently on colonial affairs. When he was secretary of state in 1846, questions arose upon the legal status of colonial clergy, full of knotty points as to which he wrote

[1] Garnett's *Edward Gibbon Wakefield*, p. 248. See also p. 232.

minutes; questions upon education in penal settlements, and so forth, in which he interested himself, not seldom differing from Stephen, the chief of the staff in the office. He composed an argumentative despatch on the commercial relations between Canada and the mother country, endeavouring to wean the Canadian assembly from its economic delusions. It was in effect little better than if written in water. He made the mistake of sending out despatches in favour of resuming on a limited scale the transportation of convicts to Australia, a practice effectually condemned by the terrible committee eight years before. Opinion in Australia was divided, Robert Lowe leading the opposition,[1] and the experiment was vetoed by Mr. Gladstone's successor at the colonial office. He exposed himself to criticism and abuse by recalling a colonial governor for inefficiency in his post; imprudently in the simplicity of his heart he added to the recall a private letter stating rumours against the governor's personal character. These he had taken on trust from the bishop of the diocese and others. The bishop left him in the lurch; the recall was one affair, the personal rumours were another; nimble partizanship confused the two, to the disadvantage of the secretary of state; the usual clatter that attends any important personage in a trivial scrape ensued; Mr. Gladstone's explanations, simple and veracious as the sunlight in their substance, were over-skilful in form, and half a dozen blunt, sound sentences would have stood him in far better stead. 'There was on my part in this matter,' he says in a fugitive scrap upon it, 'a singular absence of worldly wisdom.'[2] To colonial policy at this stage I discern no particular contribution, and the matters that I have named are now well covered with the moss of kindly time.

Almost from the first he was convinced that some leading maxims of Downing Street were erroneous. He had, from his earliest parliamentary days, regarded our colonial connection as one of duty rather than as one of advantage. When he had only been four years in the House he took a

[1] See *The Gladstone Colony* by J. F. Hogan, M.P., with prefatory note by Mr. Gladstone, April 20, 1897, and the chapter in Lord Sherbrooke's *Life*, 'Mr. Gladstone's Penal Colony.'

[2] Stafford Northcote published an effective vindication in a 'Letter to a Friend,' 1847.

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firm stand against pretensions in Canada to set their assembly on an equal footing with the imperial parliament at home.[1] On the other hand, while he should always be glad to see parliament inclined to make large sacrifices for the purpose of maintaining the colonies, he conceived that nothing could be more ridiculous, or more mistaken, than to suppose that Great Britain had anything to gain by maintaining that union in opposition to the deliberate and permanent conviction of the people of the colonies themselves.[2]

He did not at all undervalue what he called the mere political connection, but he urged that the root of such a connection lay in the natural affection of the colonies for the land from which they sprang, and their spontaneous desire to reproduce its laws and the spirit of its institutions. From first to last he always declared the really valuable tie with a colony to be the moral and the social tie.[3] The master key with him was local freedom, and he was never weary of protest against the fallacy of what was called 'preparing' these new communities for freedom: teaching a colony, like an infant, by slow degrees to walk, first putting it into long clothes, then into short clothes. A governing class was reared up for the purposes which the colony ought to fulfil itself; and, as the climax of the evil, a great military expenditure was maintained, which became a premium on war. Our modern colonists, he said, after quitting the mother country, instead of keeping their hereditary liberties, go out to Australia or New Zealand to be deprived of these liberties, and then perhaps, after fifteen or twenty or thirty years' waiting, have a portion given back to them, with magnificent language about the liberality of parliament in conceding free institutions. During the whole of that interval they are condemned to hear all the miserable jargon about fitting them for the privileges thus conferred; while, in point of fact, every year and every month during which they are retained under the administration of a

[1] Speech on affairs of Lower Canada, Mar. 8, 1837.

[2] On Government of Canada bill, May 29, 1840.

[3] See his evidence before a Select Committee on Colonial Military Expenditure, June 6, 1861.

despotic government, renders them less fit for free institutions. 'No consideration of money ought to induce parliament to sever the connection between any one of the colonies and the mother country,' though it was certain that the cost of the existing system was both large and unnecessary. But the real mischief was not here, he said. Our error lay in the attempt to hold the colonies by the mere exercise of power.[1] Even for the church in the colonies he rejected the boon of civil preference as being undoubtedly a fatal gift, — 'nothing but a source of weakness to the church herself and of discord and difficulty to the colonial communities, in the soil of which I am anxious to see the church of England take a strong and healthy root.'[2] He acknowledged how much he had learned from Molesworth's speeches,[3] and neither of them sympathised with the opinion expressed by Mr. Disraeli in those days, 'These wretched colonies will all be independent too in a few years, and are a millstone round our necks.'[4] Nor did Mr. Gladstone share any such sentiments as those of Molesworth who, in the Canadian revolt of the winter of 1837, actually invoked disaster upon the British arms.[5]

In their views of colonial policy Mr. Gladstone was in sub-

[1] See speech on Australian Colonies bill, June 26, 1849, Colonial Administration, April 16, 1849, on the Australian Colonies, Feb. 8, 1850, March 22, 1850, and May 13, 1850. On the Kaffir War, April 5, 1852. On the New Zealand Government bill, May 21, 1852. Also speech on Scientific Colonisation before the St. Martin in the Fields Association for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, March 27, 1849.

[2] On the Colonial Bishops bill, April 28, 1852.

[3] Wakefield was their common teacher. In a letter as secretary of state to Sir George Grey, then governor of New Zealand (March 27), 1846, he states how the signal ability of Wakefield and his devotion to every subject connected with the foundation of colonies has influenced him.

[4] To Lord Malmesbury, Aug. 13, 1852. *Memoirs of an Ex-Minister*, by the Earl of Malmesbury, i. p. 344.

[5] 'Should a war take place, I must declare that I should more deplore success on the part of this country than defeat; and though as an English citizen I could not but lament the disasters of my countrymen, still it would be to me a less poignant matter of regret than a success which would offer to the world the disastrous and disgraceful spectacle of a free and mighty nation succeeding by force of arms in putting down and tyrannising over a free though feebler community struggling in defence of its just rights. . . . That our dominion in America should now be brought to a conclusion, I for one most sincerely desire, but I desire it should terminate in peace and friendship. Great would be the advantages of an amicable separation of the two countries, and great would be the honour this country would reap in consenting to such a step.' Mr. Gladstone spoke the same evening in an opposite sense. — *Hans.* 39, p. 1466, Dec. 22, 1837. Walpole, *Hist. Eng.*, iii. p. 425.

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stantial accord with radicals of the school of Cobden, Hume, and Molesworth. He does not seem to have joined a reforming association founded by these eminent men among others in 1850, but its principles coincided with his own: — local independence, an end of rule from Downing Street, the relief of the mother country from the whole expense of the local government of the colonies, save for defence from aggression by a foreign power. Parliament was, as a rule, so little moved by colonial concerns that, according to Mr. Gladstone, in nine cases out of ten it was impossible for the minister to secure parliamentary attention, and in the tenth case it was only obtained by the casual operations of party spirit. Lord Glenelg's case showed that colonial secretaries were punished when they got into bad messes, and his passion for messes was punished, in the language of the journals of the day, by the life of a toad under a harrow until he was worried out of office. There was, however, no force in public opinion to prevent the minister from going wrong if he liked; still less to prevent him from going right if he liked. Popular feeling was coloured by no wish to give up the colonies, but people doubted whether the sum of three millions sterling a year for colonial defence and half a million more for civil charges, was not excessive, and they thought the return by no means commensurate with the outlay.[1] In discussions on bills effecting the enlargement of Australian constitutions, Mr. Gladstone's views came out in clear contrast with the old school. 'Spoke 1½ hours on the Australian Colonies bill,' he records (May 13, 1850), 'to an indifferent, inattentive House. But it is necessary to speak these truths of colonial policy even to unwilling ears.' In the proceedings on the constitution for New Zealand, he delivered a speech justly described as a pattern of close argument and classic oratory.[2] Lord

[1] See, for instance, *Spectator*, Jan. 17, 1845; *Times*, June 8, 1849. In 1861 it was estimated that colonial military expenditure was between three and four millions a year, about nine-tenths of which was borne by British taxpayers, and one-tenth by colonial contribution.

[2] *Edward Gibbon Wakefield*, p. 331. The reader will find an extract in the Appendix. 'The New Zealand Government bill of 1852, with all its errors and complications, was a grand step in the recovery of our old colonial policy; but perhaps its chief contribution to the re-establishment of constitutional views was Mr. Gladstone's speech on its second reading.' — Right Hon. C. B. Adderley, *Review of Earl Grey's Colonial Policy of Lord John Russell's Administration*, p. 135.

John Russell, adverting to the concession of an elective chamber and responsible government, said that one by one in this manner, all the shields of our authority were thrown away, and the monarchy was left exposed in the colonies to the assaults of democracy. 'Now I confess,' said Mr. Gladstone, in a counter minute, 'that the nominated council and the independent executive were, not shields of authority, but sources of weakness, disorder, disunion, and disloyalty.' [1]

His whole view he set out at Chester [2] a little later than the time at which we now stand: —

. . . Experience has proved that if you want to strengthen the connection between the colonies and this country — if you want to see British law held in respect and British institutions adopted and beloved in the colonies, never associate with them the hated name of force and coercion exercised by us, at a distance, over their rising fortunes. Govern them upon a principle of freedom. Defend them against aggression from without. Regulate their foreign relations. These things belong to the colonial connection. But of the duration of that connection let them be the judges, and I predict that if you leave them the freedom of judgment it is hard to say when the day will come when they will wish to separate from the great name of England. Depend upon it, they covet a share in that great name. You will find in that feeling of theirs the greatest security for the connection. Make the name of England yet more and more an object of desire to the colonies. Their natural disposition is to love and revere the name of England, and this reverence is by far the best security you can have for their continuing, not only to be subjects of the crown, not only to render it allegiance, but to render it that allegiance which is the most precious of all — the allegiance which proceeds from the depths of the heart of man. You have seen various colonies, some of them lying at the antipodes, offering to you their contributions to assist in supporting the wives and families of your soldiers, the heroes that have fallen in the war. This, I venture to say, may be said, without exaggeration, to be among the first fruits of that system

[1] See Mr. Gladstone's speech on introducing the Government of Ireland bill, April 8, 1886.

[2] Nov. 12, 1855. See also two speeches of extraordinary fervour and exaltation, one at Mold (Sept. 29, 1856), and the other at Liverpool the same evening, both in support of the claims of societies for foreign missions.

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upon which, within the last twelve or fifteen years, you have founded a rational mode of administering the affairs of your colonies without gratuitous interference.

As I turn over these old minutes, memoranda, despatches, speeches, one feels a curious irony in the charge engendered by party heat or malice, studiously and scandalously careless of facts, that Mr. Gladstone's policy aimed at getting rid of the colonies. As if any other policy than that which he so ardently enforced could possibly have saved them.

III

In 1849 Mr. Gladstone was concerned in a painful incident that befel one of his nearest friends. Nobody of humane feeling would now willingly choose either to speak or hear of it, but it finds a place in books even to this day; it has been often misrepresented; and it is so characteristic of Mr. Gladstone, and so entirely to his honour, that it cannot be wholly passed over. Fortunately a few sentences will suffice. His friend's wife had been for some time travelling abroad, and rumours by and by reached England of movements that might be no more than indiscreet, but might be worse. In consequence of these rumours, and after anxious consultations between the husband and three or four important members of his circle, it was thought best that some one should seek access to the lady, and try to induce her to place herself in a position of security. The further conclusion reached was that Mr. Gladstone and Manning were the two persons best qualified by character and friendship for this critical mission. Manning was unable to go, but Mr. Gladstone at the earnest solicitation of his friend, and also of his own wife who had long been much attached to the person missing, set off alone for a purpose, as he conscientiously believed, alike friendly to both parties and in the interests of both. I have called the proceeding characteristic, for it was in fact exactly like him to be ready at the call of friendship, and in the hope of preventing a terrible disaster, cheerfully to undertake a duty detestable to anybody and especially detestable to him; and again, it was like him to regard the affair with an optimistic simplicity

that made him hopeful of success, where to ninety-nine men of a hundred the thought of success would have seemed absurd. To no one was it a greater shock than to him when, after a journey across half Europe, he suddenly found himself the discoverer of what it was inevitable that he should report to his friend at home. In the course of the subsequent proceedings on the bill for a divorce brought into the House of Lords, he was called as a witness to show that in this case the person claiming the bill had omitted no means that duty or affection could suggest for averting the calamity with which his hearth was threatened. It was quite untrue, as he had occasion to tell the House of Commons in 1857, that he had anything whatever to do with the collection of evidence, or that the evidence given by him was the evidence, or any part of it, on which the divorce was founded. The only thing to be added is the judgment of Sir Robert Peel upon a transaction, with all the details of which he was particularly well acquainted: —

*Aug.* 26, 1849.

My Dear Gladstone, — I am deeply concerned to hear the result of that mission which, with unparalleled kindness and generosity, you undertook in the hope of mitigating the affliction of a friend, and conducing possibly to the salvation of a wife and mother. Your errand has not been a fruitless one, for it affords the conclusive proof that everything that the forbearance and tender consideration of a husband and the devotion of a friend could suggest as the means of averting the necessity for appealing to the Law for such protection as it can afford, had been essayed and essayed with the utmost delicacy. This proof is valuable so far as the world and the world's opinion is concerned — much more valuable as it respects the heart and conscience of those who have been the active agents in a work of charity. I can offer you nothing in return for that which you undertook with the promptitude of affectionate friendship, under circumstances which few would not have considered a valid excuse if not a superior obligation, but the expression of my sincere admiration for truly virtuous and generous conduct. — Ever, my dear Gladstone, most faithfully yours,

Robert Peel.

## CHAPTER IV

### DEATH OF SIR ROBERT PEEL

*(1850)*

Famous men — whose merit it is to have joined their name to events that were brought onwards by the course of things. — Paul-Louis Courier.

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It was now that Lord Palmerston strode to a front place — one of the two conspicuous statesmen with whom, at successive epochs in his career, Mr. Gladstone found himself in different degrees of energetic antagonism. This was all the stiffer and more deeply rooted, for being in both cases as much a moral antagonism as it was political. After a long spell of peace, earnestness, and political economy, the nation was for a time in a mood for change, and Palmerston convinced it that he was the man for its mood. He had his full share of shrewd common sense, yet was capable of infinite recklessness. He was good-tempered and a man of bluff cheerful humour. But to lose the game was intolerable, and it was noticed that with him the next best thing to success was quick retaliation on a victorious adversary — a trait of which he was before long to give the world an example that amused it. Yet he had no capacity for deep and long resentments. Like so many of his class, he united passion for public business to sympathy with social gaiety and pleasure. Diplomatists found him firm, prompt, clean-cut, but apt to be narrow, teasing, obstinate, a prisoner to his own arguments, and wanting in the statesman's first quality of seeing the whole and not merely the half. Metternich described him as an audacious and passionate marksman, ready to make arrows out of any wood. He was a sanguine man who always believed what he desired; a confident man

who was sure that he must be right in whatever he chose to fear. On the economic or the moral side of national life, in the things that make a nation rich and the things that make it scrupulous and just, he had only limited perception and moderate faith. Where Peel was strong and penetrating, Palmerston was weak and purblind. He regarded Bright and Cobden as displeasing mixtures of the bagman and the preacher. In 1840 he had brought us within an ace of war with France. Disputes about an American frontier were bringing us at the same period within an ace of war with the United States. When Peel and Aberdeen got this quarrel into more promising shape, Palmerston characteristically taunted them with capitulation. Lord Grey refused help in manufacturing a whig government in December 1845, because he was convinced that at that moment Palmerston at the foreign office meant an American war. When he was dismissed by Lord John Russell in 1852 a foreign ruler on an insecure throne observed to an Englishman, 'This is a blow to me, for so long as Lord Palmerston remained at the foreign office, it was certain that you could not procure a single ally in Europe.'

Yet all this policy of high spirits and careless dictatorial temper had its fine side. With none of the grandeur of the highest heroes of his school — of Chatham, Carteret, Pitt — without a spark of their heroic fire or their brilliant and steadfast glow, Palmerston represented, not always in their best form, some of the most generous instincts of his countrymen. A follower of Canning, he was the enemy of tyrants and foreign misrule. He had a healthy hatred of the absolutism and reaction that were supreme at Vienna in 1815; and if he meddled in many affairs that were no affairs of ours, at least he intervened for freedom. The action that made him hated at Vienna and Petersburg won the confidence of his countrymen. They saw him in Belgium and Holland, Spain, Italy, Greece, Portugal, the fearless champion of constitutions and nationality. Of Aberdeen, who had been Peel's foreign minister, it was said that at home he was a liberal without being an enthusiast; abroad he was a zealot, in the sense most opposed to Palmerston. So, of Palmerston it

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could be said that he was conservative at home and revolutionist abroad. If such a word can ever be applied to such a thing, his patriotism was sometimes not without a tinge of vulgarity, but it was always genuine and sincere.

This masterful and expert personage was the ruling member of the weak whig government now in office, and he made sensible men tremble. Still, said Graham to Peel, 'it is a choice of dangers and evils, and I am disposed to think that Palmerston and his foreign policy are less to be dreaded than Stanley and a new corn law.'[1] In a debate of extraordinary force and range in the summer of 1850, the two schools of foreign policy found themselves face to face. Palmerston defended his various proceedings with remarkable amplitude, power, moderation, and sincerity. He had arrayed against him, besides Mr. Gladstone, the greatest men in the House — Peel, Disraeli, Cobden, Graham, Bright — but in his last sentence the undaunted minister struck a note that made triumph in the division lobbies sure. For five hours a crowded house hung upon his lips, and he then wound up with a fearless challenge of a verdict on the question, 'Whether, as the Roman in days of old held himself free from indignity when he could say *Civis Romanus sum*, so also a British subject, in whatever land he may be, shall feel confident that the watchful eye and the strong arm of England will protect him against injustice and wrong?'

The Roman citizen was in this instance a Mediterranean Jew who chanced to be a British subject. His house at Athens had for some reason or other been sacked by the mob; he presented a demand for compensation absurdly fraudulent on the face of it. The Greek government refused to pay. England despatched the fleet to collect this and some other petty accounts outstanding. Russia and France proposed their good offices; the mediation of France was accepted; then a number of Greek vessels were peremptorily seized, and France in umbrage recalled her ambassador from London. Well might Peel, in the last speech ever delivered by him in the House of Commons, describe such a course of action as consistent neither with the dignity nor the honour

[1] Parker, iii. p. 536.

of England. The debate travelled far beyond Don Pacifico, and it stands to this day as a grand classic exposition in parliament of the contending views as to the temper and the principles on which nations in our modern era should conduct their dealings with one another.

It was in the Greek debate of 1850, which involved the censure or acquittal of Lord Palmerston, that I first meddled in speech with foreign affairs, to which I had heretofore paid the slightest possible attention. Lord Palmerston's speech was a marvel for physical strength, for memory, and for lucid and precise exposition of his policy as a whole. A very curious incident on this occasion evinced the extreme reluctance of Sir R. Peel to appear in any ostensible relation with Disraeli. Voting with him was disagreeable enough, but this with his strong aversion to the Palmerstonian policy Peel could not avoid; besides which, it was known that Lord Palmerston would carry the division. Disraeli, not yet fully recognised as leader of the protectionists, was working hard for that position, and assumed the manners of it, with Beresford, a kind of whipper-in, for his right-hand man. After the Palmerston speech he asked me on the next night whether I would undertake to answer it. I said that I was incompetent to do it, from want of knowledge and otherwise. He answered that in that case he must do it. As the debate was not to close that evening, this left another night free for Peel when he might speak and *not* be in Disraeli's *neighbourhood*. I told Peel what Disraeli had arranged. He was very well satisfied. But, shortly afterwards, I received from Disraeli a message through Beresford, that he had changed his mind, and would not speak until the next and closing night, when Peel would have to speak also. I had to make known to Peel this alteration. He received the tidings with extreme annoyance: thinking, I suppose, that if the two spoke on the same side and in the late hours just before the division it would convey the idea of some concert or co-operation between them, which it was evident that he was most anxious to avoid. But he could not help himself. Disraeli's speech was a very poor one, almost like a 'cross,' and Peel's was prudent but otherwise not one of his best.[1]

[1] Fragment of 1897.

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Mr. Gladstone had not in 1850 at all acquired such full parliamentary ascendency as belonged to the hardy veteran confronting him; still less had he such authority as the dethroned leader who sat by his side. Yet the House felt that, in the image of an ancient critic, here was no cistern of carefully collected rain-water, but the bounteous flow of a living spring. It felt all the noble elevation of an orator who transported them apart from the chicane of diplomatic chanceries, above the narrow expediencies of the particular case, though of these too he proved himself a thoroughly well-armed master, into a full view of the state system of Europe and of the principles and relations on which the fabric is founded. Now for the first time he made the appeal, so often repeated by him, to the common sentiment of the civilised world, to the general and fixed convictions of mankind, to the principles of brotherhood among nations, to their sacred independence, to the equality in their rights of the weak with the strong. Such was his language. 'When we are asking for the maintenance of the rights that belong to our fellow-subjects resident in Greece,' he said, '*let us do as we would be done by;* let us pay all respect to a feeble state and to the infancy of free institutions, which we should desire and should exact from others towards their authority and strength.' Mr. Gladstone had not read history for nothing, he was not a Christian for nothing. He knew the evils that followed in Europe the breakdown of the great spiritual power—once, though with so many defects, a controlling force over violence, anarchy, and brute wrong. He knew the necessity for some substitute, even a substitute so imperfect as the law of nations. 'You may call the rule of nations vague and untrustworthy,' he exclaimed; 'I find in it, on the contrary, a great and noble monument of human wisdom, founded on the combined dictates of sound experience, a precious inheritance bequeathed to us by the generations that have gone before us, and a firm foundation on which we must take care to build whatever it may be our part to add to their acquisitions, if indeed we wish to promote the peace and welfare of the world.'

The government triumphed by a handsome majority, and Mr. Gladstone, as was his wont, consoled himself for present disappointment by hopes for a better future. 'The majority of the House of Commons, I am convinced,' he wrote to Guizot, then in permanent exile from power, 'was with us in heart and in conviction ; but fear of inconveniences attending the removal of a ministry which there is no regularly organised opposition ready to succeed, carried the day beyond all authoritative doubt, against the merits of the particular question. It remains to hope that the demonstration which has been made may not be without its effect upon the tone of Lord Palmerston's future proceedings.'

The conflict thus opened between Mr. Gladstone and Lord Palmerston in 1850 went on in many changing phases, with some curious vicissitudes and inversions. They were sometimes frank foes, occasionally partners in opposition, and for a long while colleagues in office. Never at any time were they in thought or feeling congenial.[1]

On the afternoon of the day following this debate, Peel was thrown from his horse and received injuries from which he died three days later (July 2), in the sixty-third year of his age, and after forty-one years of parliamentary life. When the House met the next day, Hume, as one of its oldest members, at once moved the adjournment, and it fell to Mr. Gladstone to second him. He was content with a few words of sorrow and with the quotation of Scott's moving lines to the memory of Pitt : —

> 'Now is the stately column broke,
> The beacon-light is quench'd in smoke,
> The trumpet's silver sound is still,
> The warder silent on the hill!'

These beautiful words were addressed, said Mr. Gladstone, 'to a man great indeed, but not greater than Sir Robert Peel.'

'Great as he was to the last,' wrote Mr. Gladstone in one of his notes in 1851, 'I must consider the closing years of his life as beneath those that had preceded them. His enormous energies were in truth so lavishly spent upon the

[1] Mr. Gladstone's Don Pacifico speech is still not quite out of date. — June 27, *Hansard*, 1850.

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gigantic work of government, which he conducted after a fashion quite different, — I mean as to the work done in the workshop of his own brain, — from preceding and succeeding prime ministers, that their root was enfeebled, though in its feebleness it had more strength probably remaining than fell to the lot of any other public man.'

Peel may at least divide with Walpole the laurels of our greatest peace minister to that date — the man who presided over beneficent and necessary changes in national polity, that in hands less strong and less skilful might easily have opened the sluices of civil confusion. And when we think of Walpole's closing days, and of the melancholy end of most other ruling spirits in our political history — of the mortifications and disappointments in which, from Chatham and Pitt down to Canning and O'Connell, they have quitted the glorious field — Peel must seem happy in the manner and moment of his death. Daring and prosperous legislative exploits had marked his path. His authority in parliament never stood higher, his honour in the country never stood so high. His last words had been a commanding appeal for temperance in national action and language, a solemn plea for peace as the true aim to set before a powerful people.

To his father Mr. Gladstone wrote : —

*July* 2, 1850. — I thought Sir R. Peel looked extremely feeble during the debate last week. I mean as compared with what he usually is. I observed that he slept during much of Lord Palmerston's speech, that he spoke with little physical energy, and next day, Saturday, in the forenoon I thought he looked very ill at a meeting which, in common with him, I had to attend. This is all that I know and that is worth telling on a subject which is one of deep interest to all classes, from the Queen downwards. I was at the palace last night and she spoke to me with great earnestness about it. As to the division I shall say little; it is an unsatisfactory subject. The majority of the government was made up out of our ranks, partly by people staying away and partly by some twenty who actually voted with the government. By far the greater portion, I am sorry to say, of both sets of persons were what are called Peelites, and not protectionists.

The fact is, that if all calling themselves liberal be put on one side, and all calling themselves conservatives on the other, the House of Commons is as nearly as possible *equally* divided.

I have already described how Mr. Gladstone thought it a great mistake in Peel to resist any step that might put upon the protectionists the responsibilities of office. In a note composed a quarter of a century later (1876), he says: 'This I think was not only a safe experiment (after 1848) but a vital necessity. I do not, therefore, think, and I did not think, that the death of Sir R. Peel at the time when it occurred was a great calamity so far as the chief question of our internal politics was concerned. In other respects it was indeed great; in some of them it may almost be called immeasurable. The moral atmosphere of the House of Commons has never since his death been quite the same, and is now widely different. He had a kind of authority there that was possessed by no one else. Lord John might in some respects compete with, in some even excel, him; but to him, as leader of the liberals, the loss of such an opponent was immense. It is sad to think what, with his high mental force and noble moral sense, he might have done for us in after years. Even the afterthought of knowledge of such a man and of intercourse with him, is a high privilege and a precious possession.'

An interesting word or two upon his own position at this season occur in a letter to his father (July 9, 1850): —

The letter in which you expressed a desire to be informed by me, so far as I might be able to speak, whether there was anything in the rumours circulated with regard to my becoming the leader in parliament of the conservative party, did not come to my hands until yesterday. The fact is, that there is nothing whatever in those rumours beyond mere speculation on things supposed probable or possible, and they must pass for what they are worth in that character only. People feel, I suppose, that Sir Robert Peel's life and continuance in parliament were of themselves powerful obstacles to the general reorganisation of the conservative party, and as there is great annoyance and dissatisfaction with the present state of things, and a widely spread feeling that it is not

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conducive to the public interests, there arises in men's minds an expectation that the party will be in some manner reconstituted. I share in the feeling that it is desirable; but I see very great difficulties in the way, and do not at present see how they are to be effectually overcome. The House of Commons is almost equally divided, indeed, between those professing liberal and those professing conservative politics; but the late division [Don Pacifico] showed how ill the latter could hang together, even when all those who had any prominent station among them in any sense were united. . . .

Cornewall Lewis wrote, 'Upon Gladstone the death of Peel will have the effect of removing a weight from a spring — he will come forward more and take more part in discussion. The general opinion is that Gladstone will renounce his free trade opinions, and become leader of the protectionists. I expect neither the one event nor the other.'[1] More interesting still is something told by the Duke of Buccleuch. 'Very shortly,' said the duke in 1851, 'before Sir Robert Peel's death, he expressed to me his belief that Sidney Herbert or Gladstone would one day be premier; but Peel said with sarcasm, If the hour comes, Disraeli must be made governor-general of India. He will be a second Ellenborough.'[2]

[1] *Letters*, p. 226.

[2] Dean Boyle's *Recollections*, p. 32.

# CHAPTER V

## GORHAM CASE — SECESSION OF FRIENDS

(*1847-1851*)

> It is not by the State that man can be regenerated, and the terrible woes of this darkened world effectually dealt with. — Gladstone (1894).



The test case of toleration at the moment of the Oxford election of 1847 was the admission of the Jews to sit in parliament, and in the last month of 1847 Mr. Gladstone astonished his father, as well as a great host of his political supporters, by voting with the government in favour of the removal of Jewish disabilities. No ordinary degree of moral courage was needed for such a step by the member for such a constituency. 'It is a painful decision to come to,' he writes in his diary (Dec. 16), 'but the only substantive doubt it raises is about remaining in parliament, and it is truly and only the church which holds me there, though she may seem to some to draw me from it.' Pusey wrote to him in rather violent indignation, for Mr. Gladstone was the only man of that school who learned, or was able to learn, what the modern state is or is going to be. This was the third phase, so Gladstone argued, of an irresistible movement. The tory party had fought first for an anglican parliament, second they fought for a protestant parliament, and now they were fighting for a Christian parliament. Parliament had ceased to be anglican and it had ceased to be protestant, and the considerations that supported these two earlier operations thenceforth condemned the exclusion from full civil rights of those who were not Christians. To his father he explained (December 17, 1847): 'After much consideration, prolonged indeed I may

BOOK III. 1847.

say for the last two years and a half, I made up my mind to support Lord John Russell's bill for the admission of the Jews. I spoke to this effect last night. It is with reluctance that I give the vote, but I am convinced that after the civil privileges we have given them already (including the magistracy and the franchise), and after the admission we have already conceded to unitarians who refuse the whole of the most vital doctrines of the Gospel, we cannot compatibly with entire justice and fairness refuse to admit them.'

His father, who was sometimes exacting, complained of concealment. Mr. Gladstone replied that he regarded the question as one of difficulty, and he therefore took as much time as he possibly could for reflection upon it, though he never intended to run it as close as it actually came. 'I know,' he says, in a notable sentence, 'it seems strange to you that I should find it necessary to hold my judgment in suspense on a question which seemed to many so plain; *but suspense is of constant occurrence in public life upon very many kinds of questions, and without it errors and inconsistencies would be much more frequent than even they are now.*' This did not satisfy his father. 'I shall certainly read your speech to find some fair apology for your vote: good and satisfactory reason I do not expect. I cannot doubt you thought you withheld your opinions from me under the undecided state you were in, without any intention whatever to annoy me. There is, however, a natural closeness in your disposition, with a reserve towards those who may think they may have some claim to your confidence, probably increased by official habits, which it may perhaps in some cases be worth your inquiring into.' The sentence above about suspense is a key to many misunderstandings of Mr. Gladstone's character. His stouthearted friend Thomas Acland had warned him, for the sake of his personal influence, to be sure to deal with the Jew question on broad grounds, without refining, and without dragging out some recondite view not seen by common men, 'in short, to be *as little as possible like Maurice, and more like the Duke of Wellington.*' 'My speech,' Mr. Gladstone answered, 'was most unsatis-

factory in many ways, but I do not believe that it mystified or puzzled anybody.'

The following year he received the honour of a D.C.L. degree at Oxford. Mrs. Gladstone was there, he tells his father, and 'was well satisfied with my reception, though it is not to be denied that my vote upon the Jew bill is upon the whole unpalatable there, and they had been provoked by a paragraph in the *Globe* newspaper stating that I was to have the degree, and that this made it quite clear that the minority was not unfavourable to the Jew bill.'

*July* 5. — I went off after breakfast to Oxford. Joined the V.-C. and doctors in the hall at Wadham, and went in procession to the Divinity schools provided with a white neckcloth by Sir R. Inglis, who seized me at the station in horror and alarm when he saw me with a black one. In due time we were summoned to the theatre where my degree had been granted with some *non placets* but with no scrutiny. The scene remarkable to the eye and mind, so pictorial and so national. There was great tumult about me, the hisses being obstinate, and the *fautores* also very generous. 'Gladstone and the Jew bill' came sometimes from the gallery, sometimes more favouring sounds.

II

After the whig government was formed in 1846, Mr. Gladstone expressed himself as having little fear that they could do much harm, 'barring church patronage.' He was soon justified in his own eyes in this limitation of his confidence, for the next year Dr. Hampden was made a bishop.[1] This was a rude blow both to the university which had eleven years before pronounced him heretical, and to the bishops who now bitterly and fervidly remonstrated. Grave points of law were raised, but Mr. Gladstone, though warmly reprobating the prime minister's recommendation of a divine so sure to raise the hurricane, took no leading part in the strife that followed. 'Never in my opinion,' he said to his father (Feb. 2, 1848), 'was a firebrand more wantonly and gratuitously cast.' It was an indication the

[1] See above, p. 167.

BOOK III. 1850.

more of a determination to substitute a sort of general religion for the doctrines of the church. The next really marking incident after the secession of Newman was a decision of a court of law, known as the Gorham judgment. This and the preferment of Hampden to his bishopric produced the second great tide of secession. 'Were we together,' Mr. Gladstone writes to Manning at the end of 1849 (December 30), 'I should wish to converse with you from sunrise to sunset on the Gorham case. It is a stupendous issue. Perhaps they will evade it. On abstract grounds this would be still more distasteful than a decision of the state against a catholic doctrine. But what I feel is that as a body we are not ready yet for the last alternatives. More years must elapse from the secession of Newman and the group of secessions which, following or preceding, belonged to it. A more composed and settled state of the public mind in regard to our relations with the church of Rome must supervene. There must be more years of faithful *work* for the church to point to in argument, and to grow into her habits. And besides all these very needful conditions of preparation for a crisis, I want to see the question more fully answered, What will the state of its own free and good will do, or allow to be done, for the church while yet in alliance with it?'

The Gorham case was this: a bishop refused to institute a clergyman to a vicarage in the west of England, on the ground of unsound doctrine upon regeneration by baptism. The clergyman sought a remedy in the ecclesiastical court of Arches. The judge decided against him. The case then came on appeal before the judicial committee of the privy council, and here a majority with the two archbishops as assessors reversed the decision of the court below. The bishop, one of the most combative of the human race, flew to Westminster Hall, tried move upon move in queen's bench, exchequer, common pleas; declared that his archbishop had abused his high commission; and even actually renounced communion with him. But the sons of Zeruiah were too hard. The religious world in both of its two standing camps was convulsed, for if Gorham had lost the day it would

or might have meant the expulsion from the establishment of calvinists and evangelicals bag and baggage. 'I am old enough,' said the provost of Oriel, 'to remember three baptismal controversies, and this is the first in which one party has tried to eject the other from the church.' On the other hand the sacramental wing found it intolerable that fundamental doctrines of the church should be settled under the veil of royal supremacy, by a court possessed of no distinctly church character.

The judgment was declared on March 8 (1850), and Manning is made to tell a vivid story about going to Mr. Gladstone's house, finding him ill with influenza, sitting down by his bedside and telling him what the court had done; whereon Mr. Gladstone started up, threw out his arms and exclaimed that the church of England was gone unless it relieved itself by some authoritative act. A witty judge once observed in regard to the practice of keeping diaries, that it was wise to keep diary enough at any rate to prove an *alibi*. According to Mr. Gladstone's diary he was not laid up until several days later, when he did see various people, Manning included, in his bedroom. On the black day of the judgment, having dined at the palace the night before, and having friends to dine with him on this night, he records a busy day, including a morning spent after letter-writing, in discussion with Manning, Hope, and others on the Gorham case and its probable consequences. This slip of memory in the cardinal is trivial and not worth mentioning, but perhaps it tends to impair another vivid scene described on the same authority; how thirteen of them met at Mr. Gladstone's house, agreed to a declaration against the judgment, and proceeded to sign; how Mr. Gladstone, standing with his back to the fire, began to demur; and when pressed by Manning to sign, asked him in a low voice whether he thought that as a privy councillor he ought to sign such a protest; and finally how Manning, knowing the pertinacity of his character, turned and said: We will not press him further.[1] This graphic relation looks as if Mr. Gladstone were leaving his friends in the lurch. None of them ever

[1] Purcell, *Manning*, i. pp. 528–33.

BOOK III. 1850.

said so, none of them made any signs of thinking so. There is no evidence that Mr. Gladstone ever agreed to the resolution at all, and there is even evidence that points presumptively the other way: that he was taking a line of his own, and arguing tenaciously against all the rest for delay.[1] Mr. Gladstone was often enough in a hurry himself, but there never was a man in this world more resolute against being hurried by other people.[2]

We need not, however, argue probabilities. Mr. Gladstone no sooner saw the story than he pronounced it fiction. In a letter to the writer of the book on Cardinal Manning (Jan. 14, 1896) he says:—

I read with surprise Manning's statement (made first after 35 years) that I would not sign the declaration of 1850 because I 'was a privy councillor.' I should not have been more surprised had he written that I told him I could not sign because my name began with G. I had done stronger things than that when I was not only privy councillor but official servant of the crown, nay, I believe cabinet minister. The declaration was liable to *many* interior objections. Seven out of the thirteen who signed did so without (I believe) any kind of sequel. I wish you to know that I entirely disavow and disclaim Manning's statement as it *stands*. And here I have to ask you to insert two lines in your second or next edition; with the simple statement that I prepared and published with promptitude an elaborate argument

[1] See J. R. Hope's letter (undated) in Purcell, i. p. 530.

[2] On March 13, Hope writes to Mr. Gladstone from 14 Curzon Street:— 'Keble and Pusey have been with me to-day, and the latter has suggested some alterations in the resolutions; I have taken upon me to propose a meeting at your house at ¼ before 10 to-morrow morning. If you cannot or *do not wish* to be present, I do not doubt you will at any rate allow me the use of your rooms.' The meeting seems to have taken place, for the entry on March 14 in Mr. Gladstone's diary is this:— 'Hope, Badeley, Talbot, Cavendish, Denison, Dr. Pusey, Keble, Bennett, here from 9¾ to 12 on the draft of the resolutions. Badeley again in the evening. On the whole I resolved to try some immediate effort.' This would appear to be the last meeting, and Manning is not named as present. On the 18th:— 'Drs. Mill, Pusey, etc., met here in the evening, I was not with them.' On the same day Mr. Gladstone had written to the Rev. W. Maskell, 'As respects myself, I do not intend to pursue the consideration of them with those who meet to-night, first, because the pressure of other business has become very heavy upon me, and secondly and mainly, because I do not consider that the time for any enunciation of a character pointing to ultimate issues will have arrived until the Gorham judgment shall have taken effect.' No later meeting is ever mentioned.

to show that the judicial committee was historically unconstitutional, as an organ for the decision of ecclesiastical questions. This declaration was entitled, I think, 'A Letter to the Bishop of London on the Ecclesiastical Supremacy.' If I recollect right, while it dealt little with theology, it was a more pregnant production than the declaration, and it went much nearer the mark. It has been repeatedly published, and is still on sale at Murray's. I am glad to see that Sidney Herbert (a *gentleman* if ever there was one) also declined to sign. It seems to me *now*, that there is something almost ludicrous in the propounding of such a congeries of statements by such persons as we were; not the more, but certainly not the less, because of being privy councillors.

It was a terrible time; aggravated for me by heavy cares and responsibilities of a nature quite extraneous: and far beyond all others by the illness and death of a much-loved child, with great anxieties about another. My recollections of the conversations before the declaration are little but a mass of confusion and bewilderment. I stand only upon what I *did*. No one of us, I think, understood the actual position, not even our lawyers, until Baron Alderson printed an excellent statement on the points raised.[1]

III

For long the new situation filled his mind. 'The case of the church of England at this moment,' he wrote to Lord Lyttelton, 'is a very dismal one, and almost leaves men to choose between a broken heart and no heart at all. But at present it is all dark or only twilight which rests upon our future.' He busily set down thoughts upon the supremacy. He studied Cawdry's case, and he mastered Lord Coke's view of the law. He feels better pleased with the Reformation in regard to the supremacy; but also much more sensible of the drifting of the church since, away from the range of her constitutional securities; and more than ever convinced how thoroughly false is the present position. As to himself and his own work in life, in reply I suppose to something urged by Manning, he says (April 29, 1850), 'I have two characters

[1] Purcell professed to rectify the matter in the fourth edition, i. p. 536, but the reader is nowhere told that Mr. Gladstone disavowed the original story.

BOOK III. 1850.

to fulfil—that of a lay member of the church, and that of a member of a sort of wreck of a political party. I must not break my understood compact with the last, and forswear my profession, unless and until the necessity has arisen. That necessity will plainly have arisen for me when it shall have become evident that justice cannot, *i.e.*, will not, be done by the state to the church.' With boundless exaltation of spirit he expatiated on the arduous and noble task which it was now laid upon the children of the church of England amid trouble, suspense, and it might be even agony to perform. 'Fully believing that the death of the church of England is among the alternative issues of the Gorham case,' he wrote to a clerical friend (April 9), 'I yet also believe that all Christendom and all its history have rarely afforded a nobler opportunity of doing battle for the faith in the church than that now offered to English churchmen. That opportunity is a prize far beyond any with which the days of her prosperity, in any period, can have been adorned.' He does not think (June 1, 1850), that a loftier work was ever committed to men. Such vast interests were at stake, such unbounded prospects open before them. What they wanted was the divine art to draw from present terrible calamities and appalling future prospects the conquering secret to rise through the struggle into something better than historical anglicanism, which essentially depended on conditions that have passed away. 'In my own case,' he says to Manning a little later, 'there is work ready to my hand and much more than enough for its weakness, a great mercy and comfort. But I think I know what my course would be, were there not. It would be to set to work upon the holy task of clearing, opening, and establishing positive truth in the church of England, which is an office doubly blessed, inasmuch as it is both the business of truth, and the laying of firm foundations for future union in Christendom.' If this vision of a dream had ever come to pass, perhaps Europe might have seen the mightiest Christian doctor since Bossuet; and just as Bossuet's struggle was called the grandest spectacle of the seventeenth century, so to many eyes this might have appeared the greatest of the

nineteenth. Mr. Gladstone did not see, in truth he never saw, any more than Bossuet saw in his age, that the Time-Spirit was shifting the foundations of the controversy. However that may be, the interesting thing for us in the history of his life is the characteristic blaze of battle that this case now kindled in his breast.

On the eve of his return from Germany in the autumn of 1845, one of his letters to Mrs. Gladstone reveals the pressing intensity of his conviction, deepened by his intercourse with the grave and pious circles at Munich and at Stuttgart, of the supreme interest of spiritual things: —

In my wanderings my thoughts too have had time to travel; and I have had much conversation upon church matters first at Munich and since coming here with Mrs. Craven and some connections of hers staying with her, who are Roman catholics of a high school. All that I can see and learn induces me more and more to feel what a crisis for religion at large is this period of the world's history — how the power of religion and its permanence are bound up with the church — how inestimably precious would be the church's unity, inestimably precious on the one hand, and on the other to human eyes immeasurably remote — lastly how loud, how solemn is the call upon all those who hear and who *can* obey it, to labour more and more in the spirit of these principles, to give themselves, if it may be, clearly and wholly to that work. It is dangerous to put indefinite thoughts, instincts, longings, into language which is necessarily determinate. I cannot trace the line of my own future life, but I hope and pray it may not always be where it is. . . . Ireland, Ireland! that cloud in the west, that coming storm, the minister of God's retribution upon cruel and inveterate and but half-atoned injustice! Ireland forces upon us those great social and great religious questions — God grant that we may have courage to look them in the face, and to work through them. Were they over, were the path of the church clear before her, as a body able to take her trial before God and the world upon the performance of her work as His organ for the recovery of our country — how joyfully would I retire from the barren, exhausting strife of merely political contention. I do not think that you would be very sorrowful? As

BOOK III. 1851.

to ambition in its ordinary sense, we are spared the chief part of its temptations. If it has a valuable reward upon earth over and above a good name, it is when a man is enabled to bequeath to his children a high place in the social system of his country. That cannot be our case. The days are gone by when such a thing might have been possible. To leave to Willy a title with its burdens and restraints and disqualifications, but without the material substratum of wealth, and the duties and means of good, as well as the general power attending it, would not I think be acting for him in a wise and loving spirit — assuming, which may be a vain assumption, that the alternative could ever be before us.

The fact that in Scotland, a country in which Mr. Gladstone passed so much time and had such lively interests, the members of his own episcopal church were dissenters, was well fitted to hasten the progress of his mind in the liberal direction. Certain it is that in a strongly-written letter to a Scotch bishop at the end of 1851, Mr. Gladstone boldly enlarged upon the doctrine of religious freedom, with a directness that kindled both alarm and indignation among some of his warmest friends.[1] Away, he cried, with the servile doctrine that religion cannot live but by the aid of parliaments. When the state has ceased to bear a definite and full religious character, it is our interest and our duty alike to maintain a full religious freedom. It is this plenary religious freedom that brings out in full vigour the internal energies of each communion. Of all civil calamities the greatest is the mutilation, under the seal of civil authority, of the Christian religion itself. One fine passage in this letter denotes an advance in his political temper, as remarkable as the power of the language in which it finds expression: —

It is a great and noble secret, that of constitutional freedom, which has given to us the largest liberties, with the steadiest throne and the most vigorous executive in Christendom. I confess to my strong faith in the virtue of this principle. I have lived

[1] *Letter to the Right Rev. William Skinner, Bishop of Aberdeen and Primus, on the functions of laymen in the Church*, reprinted in *Gleanings*, vi. Also *Letter* to Mr. Gladstone on this letter by Charles Wordsworth, the Warden of Glenalmond. Oxford. J. H. Parker, 1852.

now for many years in the midst of the hottest and noisiest of its workshops, and have seen that amidst the clatter and the din a ceaseless labour is going on; stubborn matter is reduced to obedience, and the brute powers of society like the fire, air, water, and mineral of nature are, with clamour indeed but also with might, educated and shaped into the most refined and regular forms of usefulness for man. I am deeply convinced that among us all systems, whether religious or political, which rest on a principle of absolutism, must of necessity be, not indeed tyrannical, but feeble and ineffective systems; and that methodically to enlist the members of a community, with due regard to their several capacities, in the performance of its public duties, is the way to make that community powerful and healthful, to give a firm seat to its rulers, and to engender a warm and intelligent devotion in those beneath their sway.[1]

These were the golden trumpet-notes of a new time. When they reached the ears of old Dr. Routh, as he sat in wig and cassock among his books and manuscripts at Magdalen, revolving nearly a hundred years of mortal life, he exclaimed that he had heard enough to be quite sure that no man holding such opinions as these could ever be a proper member for the university of Oxford. A few months later, it was seen how the learned man found several hundreds of unlearned to agree with him.

IV

This chapter naturally closes with what was to Mr. Gladstone one of the dire catastrophies of his life. With growing dismay he had seen Manning drawing steadily towards the edge of the cataract. When he took the ominous step of quitting his charge at Lavington, Mr. Gladstone wrote to him from Naples (January 26, 1851): 'Without description from you, I can too well comprehend what you have suffered. . . . Such griefs ought to be sacred to all men, they must be sacred to me, even did they not touch me sharply with a reflected sorrow. You can do nothing that does not reach me, considering how long you have been a large part both

[1] *Gleanings*, vi. p. 17.

BOOK III. 1851.

of my actual life and of my hopes and reckonings. Should you do the act which I pray God with my whole soul you may not do, it will not break, however it may impair or strain, the bonds between us.' 'If you go over,' he says, in another letter of the same month, 'I should earnestly pray that you might not be as others who have gone before you, but might carry with you a larger heart and mind, able to raise and keep you above that slavery to a system, that exaggeration of its forms, that disposition to rivet every shackle tighter and to stretch every breach wider, which makes me mournfully feel that the men who have gone from the church of England after being reared in her and by her, are far more keen, and I must add, far more cruel adversaries to her, than were the mass of those whom they joined.'

In the case of Hope there had been for some considerable time a lingering sense of change. 'My affection for him, during these later years before his change, was I may almost say intense: there was hardly anything I think which he could have asked me to do, and which I would not have done. But as I saw more and more through the dim light what was to happen, it became more and more like the affection felt for one departed.' Hope, he says, was not one of those shallow souls who think that such a relation can continue after its daily bread has been taken away. At the end of March he enters in his diary: 'Wrote a paper on Manning's question and gave it him. He smote me to the ground by announcing with suppressed emotion that he is now upon the *brink*, and Hope too. Such terrible blows not only overset and oppress but, I fear, demoralise me.' On the same day in April 1851, Manning and Hope were received together into the Roman church. Political separations, though these too have their pangs, must have seemed to Mr. Gladstone trivial indeed, after the tragic severance of such a fellowship as this had been.

'They were my two props,' he wrote in his diary the next day. 'Their going may be to me a sign that my work is gone with them. . . . One blessing I have: total freedom from doubts. These dismal events have smitten, but not shaken.' The day after that, he made a codicil to his will striking out

Hope as executor, and substituting Northcote. Friendship did not die, but only lived 'as it lives between those who inhabit separate worlds.' Communication was not severed; social intercourse was not avoided; and both on occasions in life, the passing by of which, as Hope-Scott said, would be a loss to friendship, and on smaller opportunities, they corresponded in terms of the old affection. *Quis desiderio* is Mr. Gladstone's docket on one of Hope's letters, and in another (1858) Hope communicates in words of tender feeling the loss of his wife, and the consolatory teachings of the faith that she, like himself, had embraced; and he recalls to Mr. Gladstone that the root of their friendship which struck the deepest was fed by a common interest in religion.[1]

In Manning's case the wound cut deeper, and for many years the estrangement was complete.[2] To Wilberforce, the archdeacon, Mr. Gladstone wrote (April 11, 1851): —

I do indeed feel the loss of Manning, if and as far as I am capable of feeling anything. It comes to me cumulated, and doubled, with that of James Hope. Nothing like it can ever happen to me again. Arrived now at middle life, I never *can* form I suppose with any other two men the habits of communication, counsel, and dependence, in which I have now for from fifteen to eighteen years lived with them both. . . . My intellect does deliberately reject the grounds on which Manning has proceeded. Indeed they are such as go far to destroy my confidence, which was once and far too long at the highest point, in the healthiness and soundness of his. To show that at any rate this is not from the mere change he has made, I may add, that my conversations with Hope have not left any corresponding impression upon my mind with regard to him.

A wider breach was this same year made in his inmost circle. In April of the year before a little daughter, between four and five years old, had died, and was buried at Fasque.

[1] In 1868 Mr. Gladstone urged him to produce an abridged version of Lockhart's *Life of Scott*. Then Hope found that his father-in-law's own abridgment was unknown; and (1871) asks Mr. Gladstone's leave to dedicate a reprint of it to him as 'one among those who think that Scott still deserves to be remembered, not as an author only, but as a noble and vigorous man.'

[2] From 1853 to 1861 they did not correspond nor did they even meet.

BOOK III. 1851.

The illness was long and painful, and Mr. Gladstone bore his part in the nursing and watching. He was tenderly fond of his little children, and the sorrow had a peculiar bitterness. It was the first time that death entered his married home.

When he returned to Fasque in the autumn he found that his father had taken 'a decided step, nay a stride, in old age'; not having lost any of his interest in politics, but grown quite mild. The old man was nearing his eighty-seventh year. 'The very wreck of his powerful and simple nature is full of grandeur. . . . Mischief is at work upon his brain — that indefatigable brain which has had to stand all the wear and pressure of his long life.' In the spring of 1851 he finds him 'very like a spent cannon-ball, with a great and sometimes almost frightful energy remaining in him: though weak in comparison with what he was, he hits a very hard knock to those who come across him.' When December came, the veteran was taken seriously ill, and the hope disappeared of seeing him even reach his eighty-seventh birthday (Dec. 11). On the 7th he died. As Mr. Gladstone wrote to Phillimore, 'though with little left either of sight or hearing, and only able to walk from one room to another or to his brougham for a short drive, though his memory was gone, his hold upon language even for common purposes imperfect, the reasoning power much decayed, and even his perception of personality rather indistinct, yet so much remained about him as one of the most manful, energetic, affectionate, and simple-hearted among human beings, that he still filled a great space to the eye, mind, and heart, and a great space is accordingly left void by his withdrawal.' 'The death of my father,' Mr. Gladstone wrote to his brother John, 'is the loss of a great object of love, and it is the shattering of a great bond of union. Among few families of five persons will be found differences of character and opinion to the same aggregate amount as among us. We cannot shut our eyes to this fact; by opening them, I think we may the better strive to prevent such differences from begetting estrangement.'

# CHAPTER VI

## NAPLES

(*1850–1851*)

> It would be amusing, if the misfortunes of mankind ever could be so, to hear the pretensions of the government here [Naples] to mildness and clemency, because it does not put men to death, and confines itself to leaving six or seven thousand state prisoners to perish in dungeons. I am ready to believe that the king of Naples is naturally mild and kindly, but he is afraid, and the worst of all tyrannies is the tyranny of cowards. — Tocqueville [1850].



In the autumn of 1850, with the object of benefiting the eyesight of one of their daughters, the Gladstones made a journey to southern Italy, and an eventful journey it proved. For Italy it was, that now first drew Mr. Gladstone by the native ardour of his humanity, unconsciously and involuntarily, into that great European stream of liberalism which was destined to carry him so far. Two deep principles, sentiments, aspirations, forces, call them what we will, awoke the huge uprisings that shook Europe in 1848 — the principle of Liberty, the sentiment of Nationality. Mr. Gladstone, slowly and almost blindly heaving off his shoulders the weight of old conservative tradition, did not at first go beyond liberty, with all that ordered liberty conveys. Nationality penetrated later, and then indeed it penetrated to the heart's core. He went to Naples with no purposes of political propagandism, and his prepossessions were at that time pretty strongly in favour of established governments, either at Naples or anywhere else. The case had doubtless been opened to him by Panizzi — a man as Mr. Gladstone described him, 'of warm, large, and free nature, an accomplished man of letters, and a victim of political persecution, who came to this country a nearly starving refugee.' But

BOOK III. 1850.

Panizzi had certainly made no great revolutionist of him. His opinions, as he told Lord Aberdeen, were the involuntary and unexpected result of his sojourn.

He had nothing to do with the subterranean forces at work in the kingdom of the Two Sicilies, in the States of the Church, and in truth all over the Peninsula. The protracted struggle that had begun after the establishment of Austrian domination in the Peninsula in 1815, and was at last to end in the construction of an Italian kingdom — the most wonderful political transformation of the century — seemed after the fatal crisis of Novara (1849) further than ever from a close. Now was the morrow of the vast failures and disenchantments of 1848. Jesuits and absolutists were once more masters, and reaction again alternated with conspiracy, risings, desperate carbonari plots. Mazzini, four years older than Mr. Gladstone, and Cavour, a year his junior, were directing in widely different ways, the one the revolutionary movement of Young Italy, the other the constitutional movement of the Italian Resurrection. The scene presented brutal repression on the one hand; on the other a chaos of republicans and monarchists, unitarians and federalists, frenzied idealists and sedate economists, wild ultras and men of the sober middle course. In the midst was the pope, the august shadow, not long before the centre, now once again the foe, of his countrymen's aspirations after freedom and a purer glimpse of the lights of the sun. The evolution of this extraordinary historic drama, to which passion, genius, hope, contrivance, stratagem, and force contributed alike the highest and the lowest elements in human nature and the growth of states, was to be one of the most sincere of Mr. Gladstone's interests for the rest of his life.

As we shall see, he was at first and he long remained untouched by the idea of Italian unity and Italy a nation. He met some thirty or more Italian gentlemen in society at Naples, of whom seven or eight only were in any sense liberals, and not one of them a republican. It was now that he made the acquaintance of Lacaita, afterwards so valued a friend of his, and so well known in many circles in England for his

geniality, cultivation, and enlightenment. He was the legal adviser to the British embassy; he met Mr. Gladstone constantly; they talked politics and literature day and night, 'under the acacias and palms, between the fountains and statues of the Villa Reale, looking now to the sea, now to the world of fashion in the Corso.' Here Lacaita first opened the traveller's eyes to the condition of things, though he was able to say with literal truth that not a single statement of fact was made upon Lacaita's credit. Mr. Gladstone saw Bourbon absolutism no longer in the decorous hues of conventional diplomacy, but as the black and execrable thing it really was, — 'the negation of God erected into a system of government.' Sitting in court for long hours during the trial of Poerio, he listened with as much patience as he could command to the principal crown witness, giving such evidence that the tenth part of what he heard should not only have ended the case, but secured condign punishment for perjury — evidence that a prostitute court found good enough to justify the infliction on Poerio, not long before a minister of the crown, of the dreadful penalty of four-and-twenty years in irons. Mr. Gladstone accurately informed himself of the condition of those who for unproved political offences were in thousands undergoing degrading and murderous penalties. He contrived to visit some of the Neapolitan prisons, another name for the extreme of filth and horror; he saw political prisoners (and political prisoners included a large percentage of the liberal opposition) chained two and two in double irons to common felons; he conversed with Poerio himself in the bagno of Nisida chained in this way; he watched sick prisoners, men almost with death in their faces, toiling upstairs to see the doctors, because the lower regions were too foul and loathsome to allow it to be expected that professional men would enter. Even these inhuman and revolting scenes stirred him less, as it was right they should, than the corruptions of the tribunals, the vindictive treatment for long periods of time of uncondemned and untried men, and all the other proceedings of the government, 'desolating entire classes upon which the life and growth of the nation

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depend, undermining the foundation of all civil rule.' It was this violation of all law, and of the constitution to which King Ferdinand had solemnly sworn fidelity only a year or two before, that outraged him more than even rigorous sentences and barbarous prison practice. 'Even on the severity of these sentences,' he wrote, 'I would not endeavour to fix attention so much as to draw it off from the great fact of illegality, which seems to me to be the foundation of the Neapolitan system; illegality, the fountain-head of cruelty and baseness and every other vice; illegality which gives a bad conscience, creates fears; those fears lead to tyranny, that tyranny begets resentment, that resentment creates true causes of fear where they were not before; and thus fear is quickened and enhanced, the original vice multiplies itself with fearful speed, and the old crime engenders a necessity for new.'[1]

Poerio apprehended that his own case had been made worse by the intervention of Mr. Temple, the British minister and brother of Lord Palmerston; not in the least as blaming him or considering it officious. He adopted the motto, 'to suffer is to do,' '*il patire è anche operare.*' For himself he was not only willing — he rejoiced — to play the martyr's part.

I was particularly desirous, wrote Mr. Gladstone in a private memorandum, to have Poerio's opinion on the expediency of making some effort in England to draw general attention to these horrors, and dissociate the conservative party from all suppositions of winking at them; because I had had from a sensible man one strong opinion against such a course. I said to him that in my view only two modes could be thought of, — the first, amicable remonstrance through the cabinets, the second public notoriety and shame. That had Lord Aberdeen been in power the first might have been practicable, but that with Lord Palmerston it would not, because of his position relatively to the other cabinets (Yes, he said, Lord Palmerston was *isolato*), not because he would be wanting in the will. Matters standing thus, I saw no way open but that of exposure; and might that possibly exasperate the

[1] For the two *Letters to Lord Aberdeen*, see *Gleanings*, iv.

Neapolitan government, and increase their severity? His reply was, 'As to us, never mind; we can hardly be worse than we are. But think of our country, for which we are most willing to be sacrificed. Exposure will do it good. The present government of Naples rely on the English conservative party. Consequently we were all in horror when Lord Stanley last year carried his motion in the House of Lords. Let there be a voice from that party showing that whatever government be in power in England, no support will be given to such proceedings as these. It will do much to break them down. It will also strengthen the hands of a better and less obdurate class about the court. Even there all are not alike. I know it from observation. These ministers are the extremest of extremes. There are others who would willingly see more moderate means adopted.' On such grounds as these (I do not quote words) he strongly recommended me to *act*.

II

Mr. Gladstone reached London on February 26. Phillimore met him at the station with Lord Stanley's letter, of which we shall hear in the next chapter, pressing him to enter the government. 'I was never more struck,' says Phillimore, 'by the earnestness and simplicity of his character. He could speak of nothing so readily as the horrors of the Neapolitan government, of which I verily believe he thought nearly as much as the prospect of his own accession to one of the highest offices of state.' He probably thought not only nearly as much, but infinitely more of those 'scenes fitter for hell than earth,' now many hundred miles away, but still vividly burning in the haunted chambers of his wrath and pity. After rapidly despatching the proposal to join the new cabinet, after making the best he could of the poignant anxieties that were stirred in him by the unmistakeable signs of the approaching secession of Hope and Manning, he sought Lord Aberdeen (March 4), and 'found him as always, satisfactory; kind, just, moderate, humane' (to Mrs. Gladstone, March 4). He had come to London with the intention of obtaining, if possible, Aberdeen's intervention, in preference to any other mode of

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proceeding,[1] and they agreed that private representation and remonstrance should be tried in the first instance, as less likely than public action by Mr. Gladstone in parliament, to rouse international jealousy abroad, or to turn the odious tragedy into the narrow channels of party at home. Mr. Gladstone, at Lord Aberdeen's desire, was to submit a statement of the case for his consideration and judgment.

This statement, the first memorable Letter to Lord Aberdeen, was ready at the beginning of April. The old minister gave it 'mature consideration' for the best part of a month. His antecedents made him cautious. Mr. Gladstone, ten years later, admitted that Lord Aberdeen's views of Italy did not harmonise with what was his general mode of estimating human action and the world's affairs, and there was a reason for this in his past career. In very early youth he had been called upon to deal with the gigantic questions that laid their mighty weight upon European statesmen at the fall of Napoleon; the natural effect of this close contact with the vast and formidable problems of 1814–5 was to make him regard the state-system then founded as a structure on which only reckless or criminal unwisdom would dare to lay a finger. The fierce storms of 1848 were not calculated to loosen this fixed idea, or to dispose him to any new views of either the relations of Austria to Italy, or of the uncounted mischiefs to the Peninsula of which those relations were the nourishing and maintaining cause. In a debate in the Lords two years before (July 20, 1849), Lord Aberdeen had sharply criticised the British government of the day for doing the very thing officially, which Mr. Gladstone was now bringing moral compulsion on him to attempt unofficially. Lord Palmerston had called attention at Vienna to the crying evils of the government of Naples, and had boldly said that it was little wonder if men groaning

[1] There was a slight discrepancy between the two on this point, Mr. Gladstone describing the position as above, Aberdeen believing that it was by his persuasion that Mr. Gladstone dropped his intention of instant publicity. Probably the latter used such urgent language about an appeal to the public opinion of England and Europe, that Lord Aberdeen supposed it to be an immediate and not an ulterior resort. Aberdeen to Castelcicala, September 15, 1851, and Mr. Gladstone to Aberdeen, October 3.

for long years under such grievances and seeing no hope of redress, should take up any scheme, however wild, that held out any chance of relief. This and other proceedings indicating unfriendliness to the King of Naples and a veiled sympathy with rebellion shocked Aberdeen as much as Lamartine's trenchant saying that the treaties of Vienna were effete. In attacking Palmerston's foreign policy again in 1850, he protested that we had deeply injured Austria and had represented her operations in Italy in a completely false light. In his speech in the Pacifico debate, he had referred to the Neapolitan government without approval but in guarded phrases, and had urged as against Lord Palmerston that the less they admired Neapolitan institutions and usages, the more careful ought they to be not to impair the application of the sacred principles that govern and harmonise the intercourse between states, from which you never can depart without producing mischiefs a thousand fold greater than any promised advantage. Aberdeen was too upright and deeply humane a man to resist the dreadful evidence that was now forced upon him. Still that evidence plainly shook down his own case of a few months earlier, and this cannot have been pleasing. He felt the truth and the enormity of the indictment laid before him; he saw the prejudice that would inevitably be done to conservatism both at home and on the European continent, by the publication of such an indictment from the lips of such a pleader; and he perceived from Mr. Gladstone's demeanour that the decorous plausibilities of diplomacy would no more hold him back from resolute exposure, than they would put out the fires of Vesuvius or Etna.

On May 2 Lord Aberdeen wrote to Schwarzenberg at Vienna, saying that for forty years he had been connected with the Austrian government, and taken a warm interest in the fortunes of the empire; that Mr. Gladstone, one of the most distinguished members of the cabinet of Peel, had been so shocked by what he saw at Naples, that he was resolved to make some public appeal; that to avoid the pain and scandal of a conservative statesman taking such a course, would not his highness use his powerful influence to

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get done at Naples all that could reasonably be desired? The Austrian minister replied several weeks after (June 30). If he had been invited, he said, officially to interfere he would have declined; as it was, he would bring Mr. Gladstone's statements to the notice of his Sicilian majesty. Meanwhile, at great length, he reminded Lord Aberdeen that a political offender may be the worst of all offenders, and argued that the rigour exercised by England herself in the Ionian Islands, in Ceylon, in respect of Irishmen, and in the recent case of Ernest Jones, showed how careful she should be in taking up abroad the cause of bad men posing as martyrs in the holy cause of liberty.

During all these weeks, while Aberdeen was maturely considering, and while Prince Schwarzenberg was making his secretaries hunt up recriminatory cases against England, Mr. Gladstone was growing impatient. Lord Aberdeen begged him to give the Austrian minister a little more time. It was nearly four months since Mr. Gladstone landed at Dover, and every day he thought of Poerio, Settembrini, and the rest, wearing their double chains, subsisting on their foul soup, degraded by forced companionship with criminals, cut off from the light of heaven, and festering in their dungeons. The facts that escaped from him in private conversation seemed to him — so he tells Lacaita — to spread like wildfire from man to man, exciting the liveliest interest, and extending to the highest persons in the land. He waited a fortnight more, then at the beginning of July he launched his thunderbolt, publishing his Letter to Lord Aberdeen, followed by a second explanation and enlargement a fortnight later.[1] He did not obtain formal leave from Lord Aberdeen for the publication, but from their conversation took it for granted.

The sensation was profound, and not in England only. The Letters were translated into various tongues and had a large circulation. The Society of the Friends of Italy in London, the disciples of Mazzini (and a high-hearted band they were), besought him to become a member. Exiles wrote

[1] The mere announcement caused such a demand that a second edition was required almost before the first was published.

him letters of gratitude and hope, with all the moving accent of revolutionary illusion. Italian women composed fervid odes in fire and tears to the '*generoso britanno*,' the '*magnanimo cor*,' the '*difensore d'un popolo gemente*.' The press in this country took the matter up with the warmth that might have been expected. The character and the politics of the accuser added invincible force to his accusations, and for the first time in his life Mr. Gladstone found himself vehemently applauded in liberal prints. Even the contemporary excitement of English public feeling against the Roman catholic church fed the flame. It was pointed out that the King of Naples was the bosom friend of the pope, and that the infernal system described by Mr. Gladstone was that which the Roman clergy regarded as normal and complete.[1] Mr. Gladstone had denounced as one of the most detestable books he ever read a certain catechism used in the Neapolitan schools. Why then, cried the *Times*, does he omit all comment on the church which is the main and direct agent in this atrocious instruction? The clergy had either basely accepted from the government doctrines that they were bound to abhor, or else these doctrines were their own. And so things glided easily round to Dr. Cullen and the Irish education question. This line was none the less natural from the fact that the editor of the *Univers*, the chief catholic organ in France, made himself the foremost champion of the Neapolitan policy. The Letters delighted the Paris Reds. They regarded their own epithets as insipid by comparison with the ferocious adjectives of the English conservative. On the other hand, an English gentleman was blackballed at one of the fashionable clubs in Paris for no better reason than that he bore the name of Gladstone. For European conservatives read the letters with disgust and apprehension. People like Madame de Lieven pronounced Mr. Gladstone the dupe of men less honest than himself, and declared that he had injured the good cause and discredited his own fame, besides doing Lord Aberdeen the wrong of setting his name at the head of a detestable libel. The

[1] *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, October 1851. *Protestant Magazine*, September 1851.

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illustrious Guizot wrote Mr. Gladstone a long letter expressing, with much courtesy and kindness, his regret at the publication. Nothing is left in Italy, said Guizot, between the terrors of governments attacked in their very existence and the fury of the beaten revolutionists with hopes more alert than ever for destruction and chaos. The King of Naples on one side, Mazzini on the other ; such, said Guizot, is Italy. Between the King of Naples and Mazzini, he for one did not hesitate. This was Mr. Gladstone's first contact with the European party of order in the middle of the century. Guizot was a great man, but '48 had perverted his generalising intellect, and everywhere his jaundiced vision perceived in progress a struggle for life and death with 'the revolutionary spirit, blind, chimerical, insatiate, impracticable.' He avowed his own failure when he was at the head of the French government, to induce the rulers of Italy to make reforms ; and now the answer of Schwarzenberg to Lord Aberdeen, as well as the official communications from Naples, showed that like Guizot's French policy the Austrian remedy was moonshine.

Perhaps discomposed by the reproaches of reactionary friends abroad, Lord Aberdeen thought he had some reason to complain of the publication. It is not easy to see why. Mr. Gladstone from the first insisted that if private remonstrance did not work 'without elusion or delay,' he would make a public appeal. In transmitting the first letter, he described in very specific terms his idea that a short time would suffice to show whether the private method could be relied upon.[1] The attitude of the minister at Vienna, of Fortunato at Naples, and of Castelcicala in London, discovered even to Aberdeen himself how little reasonable hope there was of anything being done ; elusion and delay was all that he could expect. He was forced to give entire credit to Mr. Gladstone's horrible story, and was as far as possible from thinking it a detestable libel. He never denied the foundation of the case, or the actual state of the abominable facts. Schwarzenberg never consented to comply with his wishes even when writing before the publi-

[1] Gladstone to Lord Aberdeen, September 16, 1851.

cation. How then could Aberdeen expect that Mr. Gladstone should abandon the set and avowed purpose with which he had come flaming and resolved to England?

It was exactly because the party with which Mr. Gladstone was allied had made itself the supporter of established governments throughout Europe, that in his eyes that party became specially responsible for not passing by in silence any course of conduct, even in a foreign country, flagrantly at variance with right.[1] And what was there, when at last they arrived, in Prince Schwarzenberg's idle dissertations and recriminations, winding up with a still more idle sentence about bringing the charges under the notice of the Neapolitan government, that should induce Mr. Gladstone to abandon his purpose? He had something else to think of than the scandal to the reactionaries of Europe. 'I wish it were in your power,' he writes to Lacaita in May, 'to assure any of those directly interested, in my name, that I am not unfaithful to them, and will use every means in my power; feeble they are, and I lament it; but God is strong and is just and good; and the issue is in His hands.' That is what he was thinking of. When he talked of 'the sacred purposes of humanity' it was not artificial claptrap in a protocol.[2]

'When I consider,' Mr. Gladstone wrote to Lord Aberdeen, 'that Prince Schwarzenberg really knew the state of things at Naples well enough independently of me, and then ask myself why did he wait seven weeks before acknowledging a letter relating to the intense sufferings of human beings

[1] Mr. Gladstone in an undated draft letter to Castelcicala.

[2] The one point on which Lord Aberdeen had a right to complain was that Mr. Gladstone did not take his advice. As the point revives in Lord Stanmore's excellent life of his father, it may be worth while to reproduce two further passages from Mr. Gladstone's letter to Lord Aberdeen of July 7, 1851. Before publishing the second of the two Letters, he wrote to Lord Aberdeen: 'I ought perhaps to have asked your formal permission for the act of publication; but *I thought that I distinctly inferred it from a recent conversation with you as to the mode of proceeding*' — (Mr. Gladstone to Lord Aberdeen, July 7, 1851). Then he proceeds as to the new supplementary publication: 'If it be disagreeable to you in any manner to be the recipient of such sad communications, or if you think it better for any other reason, I would put the further matter into another form.' In answer to this, Lord Aberdeen seems not to have done any more to refuse leave to associate his name with the second Letter, than he had done to withdraw the assumed leave for the association of his name with the first.

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which were going on day by day and hour by hour, while his people were concocting all that trash about Frost and Ernest Jones and O'Brien, I cannot say that I think the spirit of the letter was creditable to him, or very promising as regards these people.' The Neapolitan government entered the field with a formal reply point by point, and Mr. Gladstone met them with a point by point rejoinder. The matter did not rest there. Soon after his arrival at home, he had had some conversation with John Russell, Palmerston, and other members of the government. They were much interested and not at all incredulous. Lord Palmerston's brother kept him too well informed about the state of things there for him to be sceptical. 'Gladstone and Molesworth,' wrote Palmerston, 'say that they were wrong last year in their attacks on my foreign policy, but they did not know the truth.'[1] Lord Palmerston directed copies of Mr. Gladstone's Letters to be sent to the British representatives in all the courts of Europe, with instructions to give a copy to each government. The Neapolitan envoy in London in his turn requested him also to send fifteen copies of the pamphlet that had been got up on the other side. Palmerston promptly, and in his most characteristic style, vindicated Mr. Gladstone against the charges of overstatement and hostile intention; warned the Neapolitan government of the violent revolution that long-continued and widespread injustice would assuredly bring upon them; hoped that they might have set to work to correct the manifold and grave abuses to which their attention had been drawn; and flatly refused to have anything to do with an official pamphlet 'consisting of a flimsy tissue of bare assertions and reckless denials, mixed up with coarse ribaldry and commonplace abuse.' This was the kind of thing that gave to Lord Palmerston the best of his power over the people of England.

In the House of Commons he spoke with no less warmth. Though he had not felt it his duty, he said, to make representations at Naples on a matter relating to internal affairs, he thought Mr. Gladstone had done himself great

[1] Ashley, *Palmerston*, ii. p. 179.

honour. Instead of seeking amusements, diving into volcanoes and exploring excavated cities, he had visited prisons, descended into dungeons, examined cases of the victims of illegality and injustice, and had then sought to rouse the public opinion of Europe. It was because he concurred in this opinion that he had circulated the pamphlet, in the hope that the European courts might use their influence.[1] As Lord Aberdeen told Madame de Lieven, Mr. Gladstone's pamphlet by the extraordinary sensation it had created among men of all parties had given a great practical triumph to Palmerston and the foreign office.

The immediate effect of Mr. Gladstone's appeal was an aggravation of prison rigour. Panizzi was convinced that the king did not know of all the iniquities exposed by Mr. Gladstone. At the close of 1851 he obtained an interview with Ferdinand, and for twenty minutes spoke of Poerio, Settembrini and the condition of the prisons. The king suddenly cut short the interview, saying, *Addio, terribile Panizzi.*[2] Faint streaks of light from the outside world pierced the gloom of the dungeons. As time went on, a lady contrived to smuggle in a few pages of Mr. Gladstone's first Letter; and in 1854 the martyrs heard vaguely of the action of Cavour. But it was not until 1859 that the tyrant, fearing the cry of horror that would go up in Europe if Poerio should die in chains, or worse than death, should go mad, commuted prison to perpetual exile,[3] and sixty-six of them were embarked for America. At Lisbon they were transferred to an American ship; the captain, either intimidated or bribed, put in at Queenstown. 'In setting foot on this free soil,' Poerio wrote to Mr. Gladstone from the Irish haven (March 12, 1859), 'the first need of my heart was to seek news of you.' Communications were speedily opened. The Italians made their way to Bristol, where they were received with sympathy and applause by the population. The deliverance of their country was close at hand.

[1] August 7, 1851. *Hansard*, cxv. p. 1949.

[2] Fagan's *Life of Panizzi*, ii. pp. 102–3.

[3] On the share of Mr. Gladstone's Letters in leading indirectly to this decision, see the address of Baldacchini, *Della Vita e de' Tempi di Carlo Poerio* (1867), p. 58.

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Not now, nor for many years to come, did Mr. Gladstone grasp the idea of Italian unity. It was impossible for him to ignore, but he did undoubtedly set aside, the fact that every shade and section of Italian liberalism from Farini on the right, to Mazzini on the furthest left, insisted on treating Italy as a political integer, and placed the independence of Italy and the expulsion of Austria from Italian soil as the first and fundamental article in the creed of reform. Like most of the English friends of the Italian cause at this time, except the small but earnest group who rallied round the powerful moral genius of Mazzini, he thought only of local freedom and local reforms. 'The purely abstract idea of Italian nationality,' said Mr. Gladstone at this time, 'makes little impression and finds limited sympathy among ourselves.' 'I am certain,' he wrote to Panizzi (June 21, 1851), 'that the Italian habit of preaching unity and nationality in preference to showing grievances produces a revulsion here; for if there are two things on earth that John Bull hates, they are an abstract proposition and the pope.' 'You need not be afraid, I think,' he told Lord Aberdeen (December 1, 1851), 'of Mazzinism from me, still less of Kossuth-ism, which means the other *plus* imposture, Lord Palmerston, and his nationalities.' But then in 1854 Manin came to England, and failed to persuade even Lord Palmerston that the unity of Italy was the only clue to her freedom.[1] The Russian war made it inconvenient to quarrel with Austria about Italy. With Mr. Gladstone he made more way. 'Seven to breakfast to meet Manin,' says the diary; 'he too is wild.' Not too wild, however, to work conversion on his host. 'It was my privilege,' Mr. Gladstone afterwards wrote, 'to welcome Manin in London in 1854, when I had long been anxious for reform in Italy, and it was from him that, in common with some other Englishmen, I had my first lessons upon Italian unity as the indispensable basis of all effectual reform under the peculiar circumstances of that country.'[2] Yet the page of Dante holds the lesson.

[1] *Gleanings*, iv. pp. 188, 195. Trans. of Farini, pref. p. ix.

[2] To Dr. Errera, author of *A Life of Manin*, Sept. 28, 1872. For Manin's account, see his *Life*, by Henri Martin, p. 377.

III

On one important element in the complex Italian case at this time, Mr. Gladstone gained a clear view.

Some things I have learned in Italy, he wrote to Manning (*January* 26, 1851), that I did not know before, one in particular. The temporal power of the pope, that great, wonderful, and ancient erection, is *gone*. The problem has been worked out — the ground is mined — the train is laid — a foreign force, in its nature transitory, alone stays the hand of those who would complete the process by applying the match. This seems, rather than is, a digression. When that event comes, it will bring about a great shifting of parts — much super- and much subter-position. God grant it may be for good. I desire it, because I see plainly that justice requires it. Not out of malice to the popedom; for I cannot at this moment dare to answer with a confident affirmative, the question, a very solemn one — Ten, twenty, fifty years hence, will there be any other body in western Christendom witnessing for fixed dogmatic truth? With all my heart I wish it well (though perhaps not wholly what the consistory might think agreed with the meaning of the term) — it would be to me a joyous day in which I should see it really doing well.

Various ideas of this kind set him to work on the large and curious enterprise, long since forgotten, of translating Farini's volumes on the Roman State from 1815 down to 1850. According to the entries in his diary he began and finished the translation of a large portion of the book at Naples in 1850 — dictating and writing almost daily. Three of the four volumes of this English translation were done with extraordinary speed by Mr. Gladstone's own hand, and the fourth was done under his direction.[1] His object was, without any reference to Italian unity, to give an illustration of the actual working of the temporal power in its latest history. It is easy to understand how the theme fitted in with the widest topics of his life; the nature of

[1] The first two volumes were published by Mr. Murray in 1852, and the last two in 1854. '*June* 17, 1851. — Got my first copies of Farini. Sent No. 1 to the Prince; and wrote with sad feelings in those for Hope and Manning.' — *Diary.*

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theocratic government; the possibility (to borrow Cavour's famous phrase) of a free church in a free state; and above all, — as he says to Manning now, and said to all the world twenty years later in the day of the Vatican decrees, — the mischiefs done to the cause of what he took for saving truth by evil-doing in the heart and centre of the most powerful of all the churches. His translation of Farini, followed by his article on the same subject in the *Edinburgh* in 1852, was his first blast against 'the covetous, domineering, implacable policy represented in the term Ultramontanism; the winding up higher and higher, tighter and tighter, of the hierarchical spirit, in total disregard of those elements by which it ought to be checked and balanced; and an unceasing, covert, smouldering war against human freedom, even in its most modest and retiring forms of private life and of the individual conscience.' With an energy not unworthy of Burke at his fiercest, he denounces the fallen and impotent regality of the popes as temporal sovereigns. 'A monarchy sustained by foreign armies, smitten with the curse of social barrenness, unable to strike root downward or bear fruit upward, the sun, the air, the rain soliciting in vain its sapless and rotten boughs — such a monarchy, even were it not a monarchy of priests, and tenfold more because it is one, stands out a foul blot upon the face of creation, an offence to Christendom and to mankind.'[1] As we shall soon see, he was just as wrathful, just as impassioned and as eloquent, when, in a memorable case in his own country, the temporal power bethought itself of a bill for meddling with the rights of a Roman voluntary church.

[1] *Gleanings*, iv. pp. 160, 176.

# CHAPTER VII

## RELIGIOUS TORNADO — PEELITE DIFFICULTIES

*(1851–1852)*

> I AM always disposed to view with regret the rupture of party ties — my disposition is rather to maintain them. I confess I look, if not with suspicion, at least with disapprobation on any one who is disposed to treat party connections as matters of small importance. My opinion is that party ties closely appertain to those principles of confidence which we entertain for the House of Commons. — GLADSTONE (1852).



As we have seen, on the morning of his arrival from his Italian journey (February 26, 1851) Mr. Gladstone found that he was urgently required to meet Lord Stanley. Mortified by more than one repulse at the opening of the session, the whigs had resigned. The Queen sent for the protectionist leader. Stanley said that he was not then prepared to form a government, but that if other combinations failed, he would make the attempt. Lord John Russell was once more summoned to the palace, this time along with Aberdeen and Graham — the first move in a critical march towards the fated coalition between whigs and Peelites. The negotiation broke off on the No Popery bill; Lord John was committed to it, the other two strongly disapproved. The Queen next wished Aberdeen to undertake the task. Apparently not without some lingering doubts, he declined on the good ground that the House of Commons would not stand his attitude on papal aggression.[1] Then according to

[1] 'He had told the Queen that he thought all the offices might be filled in a respectable manner from among the members of the Peel administration. On a subsequent day both Herbert and Cardwell made out from his conversation what I did not clearly catch, namely that Lord Aberdeen himself would have acted on the Queen's wish, and that Graham had either suggested the difficulty altogether, or at any rate got it put forward into its position.' Gladstone Memo., April 22, 1851.

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promise Lord Stanley tried his hand. Proceedings were suspended for some days until Mr. Gladstone should be on the ground. He no sooner reached Carlton Gardens, than Lord Lincoln arrived, eager to dissuade him from accepting office. Before the discussion had gone far, the tory whip hurried in from Stanley, begging for an immediate visit.

I promised, says Mr. Gladstone, to go directly after seeing Lord Aberdeen. But he came back with a fresh message to go at once, and *hear* what Stanley had to say. I did not like to stickle, and went. He told me his object was that I should take office with him — *any* office, subject to the reservation that the foreign department was offered to Canning, but if he declined it was open to me, along with others of which he named the colonial office and the board of trade. Nothing was said of the leadership of the House of Commons, but his anxiety was evident to have any occupant but one for the foreign office. I told him, I should ask no questions and make no remark on these points, as none of them would constitute a difficulty with me, provided no preliminary obstacle were found to intervene. Stanley then said that he proposed to maintain the system of free trade generally, but to put a duty of five or six shillings on corn. I heard him pretty much in silence, but with an intense sense of relief; feeling that if he had put protection in abeyance, I might have had a most difficult question to decide, whereas now I had no question at all. I thought, however, it might be well that I should still see Lord Aberdeen before giving him an answer; and told him I would do so. I asked him also what was his intention with respect to papal aggression. He said that this measure was hasty and intemperate as well as ineffective; and that he thought something much better might result from a comprehensive and deliberate inquiry. I told him I was utterly against all penal legislation and against the ministerial bill, but that I did not on principle object to inquiry; that, on general as well as on personal grounds, I wished well to his undertakings; and that I would see Lord Aberdeen, but that what he had told me about corn constituted, I must not conceal from him, 'an enormous difficulty.' I used this expression for the purpose of preparing him to receive the

answer it was plain I must give; he told me his persevering would probably depend on me.

Mr. Gladstone next hastened to Lord Aberdeen, and learned what had been going on during his absence abroad. He learned also the clear opinions held by Aberdeen and Graham against No Popery legislation, and noticed it as remarkable that so many minds should arrive independently at the same conclusion on a new question, and in opposition to the overwhelming majority. 'I then,' he continues, 'went on to the levee, saw Lord Normanby and others, and began to bruit abroad the fame of the Neapolitan government. Immediately after leaving the levee (where I also saw Canning, told him what I meant to do, and gathered that he would do the like), I changed my clothes and went to give Lord Stanley my answer, at which he did not show the least surprise. He said he would still persevere, though with little hope. I think I told him it seemed to me he ought to do so. I was not five minutes with him this second time.'[1]

The protectionists having failed, and the Peelites standing aside, the whigs came back, most of them well aware that they could not go on for long. The events of the late crisis had given Mr. Gladstone the hope that Graham would effectively place himself at the head of the Peelites, and that they would now at length begin to take an independent course of their own. 'But it soon appeared that, unconsciously I think more than consciously, he is set upon the object of avoiding the responsibility either of taking the government with the Peel squadron, or of letting in Stanley and his friends.' Here was the weak point in a strong and capable character. When Graham died ten years after this (1861), Mr. Gladstone wrote to a friend, 'On administrative questions, for the last twenty years and more, I had more spontaneous recourse to him for advice, than to all other colleagues together.' In some of the foundations of character no two men could be more unlike. One of his closest allies talks to Graham of 'your sombre temperament.' 'My

[1] Memorandum, dated Fasque, April 22, 1851.

BOOK III. 1851.

forebodings are always gloomy,' says Graham himself; 'I shudder on the brink of the torrent.' All accounts agree that he was a good counsellor in cabinet, a first-rate manager of business, a good if rather pompous speaker, admirably loyal and single-minded, but half-ruined by intense timidity. I have heard nobody use warmer language of commendation about him than Mr. Bright. But nature had not made him for a post of chief command.

It by and by appeared that the Duke of Newcastle, known to us hitherto as Lord Lincoln, coveted the post of leader, but Mr. Gladstone thought that on every ground Lord Aberdeen was the person entitled to hold it. 'I made,' says Mr. Gladstone, 'my views distinctly known to the duke. He took no offence. I do not know what communications he may have held with others. But the upshot was that Lord Aberdeen became our leader. And this result was obtained without any shock or conflict.'[1]

II

In the autumn of 1850 the people of this country were frightened out of their senses by a document from the Vatican, dividing England into dioceses bearing territorial titles and appointing Cardinal Wiseman to be Archbishop of Westminster. The uproar was tremendous. Lord John Russell cast fuel upon the flame in a perverse letter to the Bishop of Durham (Nov. 4, 1850). In this unhappy document he accepted the description of the aggression of the pope upon our protestantism as insolent and insidious, declared his indignation to be greater even than his alarm, and even his alarm at the aggressions of a foreign sovereign to be less than at the conduct of unworthy sons of the church of England within her own gates. He wound up by declaring that the great mass of the nation looked with contempt upon the mummeries of superstition. Justified indeed was Bright's stern rebuke to a prime minister of the Queen who thus allowed himself to offend and to indict eight millions of his countrymen, recklessly to create fresh discords between the Irish and

[1] Memorandum, Sept. 9, 1897.

English nations, and to perpetuate animosities that the last five-and-twenty years had done so much to assuage. Having thus precipitately committed himself, the minister was forced to legislate. 'I suspect,' wrote Mr. Gladstone to his great friend, Sir Walter James, 'John Russell has more rocks and breakers ahead than he reckoned upon when he dipped his pen in gall to smite first the pope, but most those who not being papists are such traitors and fools as really to mean something when they say, "I believe in one Holy Catholic Church."' There was some division of opinion in the cabinet,[1] but a bill was settled, and the temper of the times may be gauged by the fact that leave to introduce it was given by the overwhelming majority of 395 votes to 63.

In his own language, Mr. Gladstone lamented and disapproved of the pope's proceeding extremely, and had taken care to say so in parliament two and a half years before, when 'Lord John Russell, if he had chosen, could have stopped it; but the government and the press were alike silent at that period.'[2] His attitude is succinctly described in a letter to Greswell, his Oxford chairman, in 1852: 'Do not let it be asserted without contradiction that I ever felt or counselled indifference in regard to the division of England into Romish dioceses. So far is this from being the truth that shortly after I was elected, *when the government were encouraging the pope to proceed*, and when there was yet time to stop the measure (which I deplore sincerely) by amicable means, I took the opportunity in the House (as did Sir R. Inglis, I *think* a little later), of trying to draw attention to it. But it was nobody's game then, and the subject fell to the ground. Amicable prevention I desired; spiritual and ecclesiastical resistance I heartily approved; but while I say this, I cannot recede from one inch of the ground I took in opposing the bill, and I would far rather quit parliament for ever than not have voted against so pernicious a measure.'

Other matters, as we have seen, brought on a ministerial crisis, the bill was stopped, and after the crisis was over

[1] *Grey Papers.*

[2] To Phillimore, Nov. 26, 1850.

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the measure came to life again with changes making it still more futile for its ends. The Peelites while, like Mr. Bright, 'despising and loathing' the language of the Vatican and the Flaminian Gate, had all of them without concert taken this outburst of prejudice and passion at its right value, and all resolved to resist legislation. How, they asked, could you tolerate the Roman catholic religion, if you would not tolerate its tenet of the ecclesiastical supremacy of the pope; and what sort of toleration of such a tenet would that be, which forbade the pope to name ecclesiastics to exercise the spiritual authority exercised in any other voluntary episcopal church, Scottish, colonial, or another? Why was it more of a usurpation for the pope to make a new Archbishop of Westminster, than to administer London by the old form of vicars apostolic? Was not the action of the pope, after all, a secondary consideration, and the frenzy really and in essence an explosion of popular wrath against the Puseyites? What was to be thought of a prime minister who, at such risk to the public peace, tried to turn the ferment to account for the sake of strengthening his tottering government? To all this there was no rational reply; and even the editor of a powerful newspaper that every morning blew up the coals, admitted to Greville that 'he thought the whole thing humbug and a pack of nonsense!'[1]

The debate on the second reading was marked by a little brutality and much sanctimony. Mr. Gladstone (March 25, 1851) spoke to a House practically almost solid against him. Yet his superb resources as an orator, his transparent depth of conviction, the unmistakeable proofs that his whole heart was in the matter, mastered his audience and made the best of them in their hearts ashamed. He talked of Boniface VIII. and Honorius IX.; he pursued a long and close historical demonstration of the earnest desire of the lay catholics of this country for diocesan bishops as against vicars apostolic; he moved among bulls and rescripts, briefs and pastorals and canon law, with as much ease as if he had been arguing about taxes and tariffs. Through it all the House watched and listened in enchantment, as to

[1] Greville, Part II. vol. iii. p. 369.

a magnificent tragedian playing a noble part in a foreign tongue. They did not apprehend every point, nor were they converted, but they felt a man with the orator's quality of taking fire and kindling fire at a moral idea. They felt his command of the whole stock of fact and of principle belonging to his topics, as with the air and the power of a heroic master he cleared the way before him towards his purpose. Along with complete grasp of details, went grasp of some of the most important truths in the policy of a modern state. He clearly perceived the very relevant fact, so often overlooked by advocates of the free church in a free state, that 'there is no religious body in the world where religious offices do not in a certain degree conjoin with temporal incidents.' But this did not affect the power of his stroke, as he insisted on respect for the frontier — no scientific frontier — between temporal and spiritual. 'You speak of the progress of the Roman catholic religion, and you pretend to meet that progress by a measure false in principle as it is ludicrous in extent. You must meet the progress of that spiritual system by the progress of another; you can never do it by penal enactments. Here, once for all, I enter my most solemn, earnest, and deliberate protest against all attempts to meet the spiritual dangers of our church by temporal legislation of a penal character.' The whole speech is in all its elements and aspects one of the great orator's three or four most conspicuous masterpieces, and the reader would not forgive me if I failed to transcribe its resplendent close. He went back to a passage of Lord John Russell's on the Maynooth bill of 1845. 'I never heard,' said Mr. Gladstone, 'a more impressive passage delivered by any statesman at any time in this House.'

The noble lord referred to some beautiful and touching lines of Virgil, which the house will not regret to hear: —

> 'Scilicet et tempus veniet, cum finibus illis
> Agricola, incurvo terram molitus aratro,
> Exesa inveniet scabra rubigine pila;
> Aut gravibus rastris galeas pulsabit inanes,
> Grandiaque effossis mirabitur ossa sepulcris.'[1]

[1] *Georgics*, i. 493–7. 'Aye, and time will come when the husbandman with bent ploughshare upturning the clods, shall find all corroded by rusty scurf the Roman pikeheads; shall strike with heavy rake on empty helms, and gaze in wonder on giant bones cast from their broken graves.'

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And he said, upon those scenes where battles have been fought, the hand of nature effaces the traces of the wrath of man, and the cultivator of the soil in following times finds the rusted arms, and looks upon them with calm and joy, as the memorials of forgotten strife, and as quickening his sense of the blessings of his peaceful occupation. The noble lord went on to say, in reference to the powerful opposition then offered to the bill for the endowment of Maynooth, that it seems as if upon the questions of religious freedom, our strife is never to cease, and our arms are never to rust. Would any man, who heard the noble lord deliver these impressive sentiments, have believed not only that the strife with respect to religious liberty was to be revived with a greater degree of acerbity, in the year 1851, but that the noble lord himself was to be a main agent in its revival — that his was to be the head that was to wear the helmet, and his the hand that was to grasp the spear? My conviction is, that this great subject of religious freedom is not to be dealt with as one of the ordinary matters in which you may, with safety or with honour, do to-day and undo to-morrow. This great people, whom we have the honour to represent, moves slowly in politics and legislation; but, although it moves slowly, it moves steadily. The principle of religious freedom, its adaptation to our modern state, and its compatibility with ancient institutions, was a principle which you did not adopt in haste. It was a principle well tried in struggle and conflict. It was a principle which gained the assent of one public man after another. It was a principle which ultimately triumphed, after you had spent upon it half a century of agonising struggle. And now what are you going to do? You have arrived at the division of the century. Are you going to repeat Penelope's process, but without the purpose of Penelope? Are you going to spend the decay and the dusk of the nineteenth century in undoing the great work which with so much pain and difficulty your greatest men have been achieving during its day-break and its youth? Surely not. Oh, recollect the functions you have to perform in the face of the world. Recollect that Europe and the whole of the civilised world look to England at this moment not less, no, but even more than ever they looked to her before, as the mistress and guide of nations, in regard to the great work of civil legislation. And what is it they chiefly admire

in England? It is not the rapidity with which you form constitutions and broach abstract theories. On the contrary; they know that nothing is so distasteful to you as abstract theories, and that you are proverbial for resisting what is new until you are well assured by gradual effort, by progressive trials, and beneficial tendency. But they know that when you make a step forward you keep it. They know that there is reality and honesty, strength and substance, about your proceedings. They know that you are not a monarchy to-day, a republic to-morrow, and a military despotism the day after. They know that you have been happily preserved from irrational vicissitudes that have marked the career of the greatest and noblest among the neighbouring nations. Your fathers and yourselves have earned this brilliant character for England. Do not forfeit it. Do not allow it to be tarnished or impaired. Show, I beseech you — have the courage to show the pope of Rome, and his cardinals, and his church, that England too, as well as Rome, has her *semper eadem;* and that when she has once adopted some great principle of legislation, which is destined to influence the national character, to draw the dividing lines of her policy for ages to come, and to affect the whole nature of her influence and her standing among the nations of the world — show that when she has done this slowly, and done it deliberately, she has done it once for all; and that she will then no more retrace her steps than the river that bathes this giant city can flow back upon its source. The character of England is in our hands. Let us feel the responsibility that belongs to us, and let us rely on it; if to-day we make this step backwards, it is one which hereafter we shall have to retrace with pain. We cannot change the profound and resistless tendencies of the age towards religious liberty. It is our business to guide and to control their application; do this you may, but to endeavour to turn them backwards is the sport of children, done by the hands of men, and every effort you may make in that direction will recoil upon you in disaster and disgrace. The noble lord appealed to gentlemen who sit behind me, in the names of Hampden and Pym. I have great reverence for these in one portion at least of their political career, because they were men energetically engaged in resisting oppression. But I would rather have heard Hampden and Pym quoted on any other subject

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than one which relates to the mode of legislation or the policy to be adopted with our Roman catholic fellow-citizens, because, if there was one blot on their escutcheon, if there was one painful — I would almost say odious — feature in the character of the party among whom they were the most distinguished chiefs, it was the bitter and ferocious intolerance which in them became the more powerful because it was directed against the Roman catholics alone. I would appeal in other names to gentlemen who sit on this side of the House. If Hampden and Pym were friends of freedom, so were Clarendon and Newcastle, so were the gentlemen who sustained the principles of loyalty. . . . They were not always seeking to tighten the chains and deepen the brand. Their disposition was to relax the severity of the law, and attract the affections of their Roman catholic fellow-subjects to the constitution by treating them as brethren. . . . We are a minority insignificant in point of numbers. We are more insignificant still, because we are but knots and groups of two or three, we have no power of cohesion, no ordinary bond of union. What is it that binds us together against you, but the conviction that we have on our side the principle of justice — the conviction that we shall soon have on our side the strength of public opinion (*oh, oh!*). I am sure I have not wished to say a syllable that would wound the feelings of any man, and if in the warmth of argument such expressions should have escaped me, I wish them unsaid. But above all we are sustained by the sense of justice which we feel belongs to the cause we are defending; and we are, I trust, well determined to follow that bright star of justice, beaming from the heavens, whithersoever it may lead.

All this was of no avail, just as the same arguments and temper on two other occasions of the same eternal theme in his life,[1] were to be of no avail. Disraeli spoke strongly against the line taken by the Peelites. The second reading was carried by 438 against 95, one-third even of this minority being Irish catholics, and the rest mainly Peelites, 'a limited but accomplished school,' as Disraeli styled them. Hume asked Mr. Gladstone for his speech for publication to circulate among the dissenters who, he said, know nothing about

[1] Affirmation bill (1883) and Religious Disabilities Removal bill (1891).

religious liberty. It was something, however, to find Mr. Gladstone, the greatest living churchman, and Bright, the greatest living nonconformist, voting in the same lobby. The fight was stiff, and was kept up until the end of the summer. The weapon that had been forged in this blazing furnace by these clumsy armourers proved blunt and worthless; the law was from the first a dead letter, and it was struck out of the statute book in 1871 in Mr. Gladstone's own administration.[1]

III

In the autumn (1851) a committee of the whig cabinet, now reinforced by the admission for the first time of Lord Granville, was named to prepare a reform bill. Palmerston, no friend to reform, fell into restive courses that finally upset the coach. The cabinet, early in November, settled that he should not receive Kossuth, and he complied; but he received a public deputation and an address complimenting him for his exertions on Kossuth's behalf. The court at this proceeding took lively offence, and the Queen requested the prime minister to ascertain the opinion of the cabinet upon it. Such an appeal by the sovereign from the minister to the cabinet was felt by them to be unconstitutional, and though they did not conceal from Palmerston their general dissatisfaction, they declined to adopt any resolution. Before the year ended Palmerston persisted in taking an unauthorised line of his own upon Napoleon's *coup d'état* (this time for once not on the side of freedom against despotism), and Lord John closed a correspondence between them by telling him that he could not advise the Queen to leave the seals of the foreign department any longer in his hands. This dismissal of Palmerston introduced a new

[1] One of the most illustrious of the European liberals of the century wrote to Senior:—

Ce que vous me dites que le bill contre les titres ecclésiastiques ne mènera à rien, me paraît vraisemblable, grâce aux mœurs du pays. Mais pourquoi faire des lois pires que les mœurs? C'est le contraire qui devait être. Je vous avoue que j'ai été de cœur et d'esprit avec ceux qui comme Lord Aberdeen et M. Gladstone, se sont opposés au nom de la liberté et du principe même de la réforme, à ces atteintes à la fois vaines et dangereuses que le bill a portées au moins en théorie à l'indépendance de conscience. Où se réfugiera la liberté religieuse, si on la chasse de l'Angleterre?—Tocqueville, *Corr.* iii. p. 274.

BOOK III. 1852.

element of disruption and confusion, for the fallen minister had plenty of friends. Lord Lansdowne was very uneasy about reform, and talked ominously about preferring to be a supporter rather than a member of the government; and whig dissensions, though less acute in type, threatened a perplexity as sharp in the way of a stable administration, as the discords among conservatives.

Lord John (Jan. 14, 1852) next asked his cabinet whether an offer should be made to Graham. A long discussion followed; whether Graham alone would do them any good; whether the Peelites, considering themselves as a party, might join, but would not consent to be absorbed; whether an offer to them was to be a persistent attempt in good faith or only a device to mend the parliamentary case, if the offer were made and refused. Two or three of the whig ministers, true to the church traditions of the caste, made great difficulties about the Puseyite notions of Newcastle and Mr. Gladstone. 'Gladstone,' writes one of them, 'is a Jesuit, and more Peelite than I believe was Peel himself.' In the end Lord John Russell and his men met parliament without any new support. Their tottering life was short, and it was an amendment moved by Palmerston (Feb. 20) on a clause in a militia bill, that slit the thread. The hostile majority was only eleven, but other perils lay pretty thick in front. The ministers resigned, and Lord Stanley, who had now become Earl of Derby, had no choice but to give his followers their chance. The experiment that seemed so impossible when Bentinck first tried it, of forming a new third party in the state, seemed up to this point to have prospered, and the protectionists had a definite existence. The ministers were nearly all new to public office, and seventeen of them were for the first time sworn of the privy council in a single day. One jest was that the cabinet consisted of three men and a half—Derby, Disraeli, St. Leonards, and a worthy fractional personage at the admiralty.

Sending to his wife at Hawarden a provisional list (Feb. 23), Mr. Gladstone doubts the way in which the offices were distributed:—'It is not good, as compared I mean with what it should have been. Disraeli could not have been worse

placed than at the exchequer. Henley could not have been worse than at the board of trade. T. Baring, who would have been their best chancellor of the exchequer, seems to have declined. Herries would have been much better than Disraeli for that particular place. I suppose Lord Malmesbury is temporary foreign secretary, to hold the place for S. Canning. What does not appear on the face of the case is, who is to lead the House of Commons, and about that everybody seems to be in the dark. . . .'

IV

The first Derby administration, thus formed and covering the year 1852, marks a highly interesting stage in Mr. Gladstone's career. 'The key to my position,' as he afterwards said, 'was that my opinions went one way, my lingering sympathies the other.' His opinions looked towards liberalism, his sympathies drew him to his first party. It was the Peelites who had now been thrown into the case of a dubious third party. At the end of February Mr. Gladstone sought Lord Aberdeen, looking 'to his weight, his prudence, and his kindliness of disposition as the main anchor of their section. His tone has usually been, during the last few years, that of anxiety to reunite the fragments and reconstruct the conservative party, but yesterday, particularly at the commencement of our conversation, he seemed to lean the other way; spoke kindly of Lord Derby and wished that *he* could be extricated from the company with which he is associated; said that though called a despot all his life, he himself had always been, and was now, friendly to a liberal policy. He did not, however, like the reform question in Lord John's hands; but he considered, I thought (and if so he differed from me), that on church questions we all might co-operate with him securely.' Mr. Gladstone, on the contrary, insisted that their duty plainly was to hold themselves clear and free from whig and Derbyite alike, so as to be prepared to take whatever of three courses might, after the defeat of protectionist proposals, seem most honourable — whether conservative reconstruction, or liberal conjunction,

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or Peelism single-handed. The last he described as their least natural position; for, he urged, they might be 'liberal in the sense of Peel, working out a liberal policy through the medium of the conservative party.' To that procrastinating view Mr. Gladstone stood tenaciously, and his course now is one of the multitudinous illustrations of his constant abhorrence of premature committal, and the taking of a second step before the first.

After Aberdeen he approached Graham, who proceeded to use language that seemed to point to his virtual return to his old friends of the liberal party, for the reader will not forget the striking circumstance that the new head of a conservative government, and the most trusted of the cabinet colleagues of Peel, had both of them begun official life in the reform ministry of Lord Grey. Graham said he had a very high opinion of Lord Derby's talents and character, and that Lord J. Russell had committed many errors, but that looking at the two as they stood, he thought that the opinions of Lord Derby as a whole were more dangerous to the country than those of Lord John. Mr. Gladstone said it did not appear to him that the question lay between these two; but Graham's reception of this remark implied a contrary opinion.

Lincoln, now Duke of Newcastle, he found obdurate in another direction, speaking with great asperity against Lord Derby and his party; he would make no vows as to junction, not even that he would not join Disraeli; but he thought this government must be opposed and overthrown; then those who led the charge against it would reap the reward; if the Peelites did not place themselves in a prominent position, others would. They had a further conversation. The duke told him that Beresford, the whip, had sent out orders to tory newspapers to run them down; that the same worthy had said 'The Peelites, let them go to hell.' Mr. Gladstone replied that Beresford's language was not a good test of the feelings of his party, and that his violence and that of other people was stimulated by what they imagined or heard of the Peelites. Newcastle persisted in his disbelief in the government. 'During this conversation, held on a sofa

at the Carlton, we were rather warm; and I said to him, "It appears to me that you do not believe this party to be composed even of men of honour or of gentlemen." . . . He clung to the idea that we were hereafter to form a party of our own, containing all the good elements of both parties. To which I replied, the country cannot be governed by a third or middle party unless it be for a time only, and on the whole I thought a liberal policy would be worked out with greater security to the country through the medium of the conservative party, and I thought a position like Peel's on the liberal side of that party preferable, comparing all advantages and disadvantages, to the conservative side of the liberal party. And when he spoke of the tories as the obstructive body I said not all of them—for instance Mr. Pitt, Mr. Canning, Mr. Huskisson, and in some degree Lord Londonderry and Lord Liverpool.'

The upshot of all these discussions was the discovery that there were at least four distinct shades among the Peelites. 'Newcastle stands nearly alone, if not quite, in the rather high-flown idea that we are to create and lead a great, virtuous, powerful intelligent party, neither the actual conservative nor the actual liberal party but a new one. Apart from these witcheries, Graham was ready to take his place in the liberal ranks; Cardwell, Fitzroy and Oswald would I think have gone with him, as F. Peel and Sir C. Douglas went before him. But this section has been arrested, not thoroughly amalgamated, owing to Graham. Thirdly, there are the great bulk of the Peelites from Goulburn downwards, more or less undisguisedly anticipating junction with Lord Derby, and avowing that free trade is their only point of difference. Lastly myself, and I think I am with Lord Aberdeen and S. Herbert, who have nearly the same desire, but feel that the matter is too crude, too difficult and important for anticipating any conclusion, and that our clear line of duty is independence, until the question of protection shall be settled.' (March 28, 1852.)

The personal composition of this section deserves a sentence. In 1835, during Peel's short government, the whig phalanx opposed to it in the House of Commons consisted

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of John Russell and seven others.[1] Of these eight all were alive in 1851, seven of them in the then existing cabinet; six of the eight still in the Commons. On the other hand, Peel's cabinet began its career thus manned in the Commons — Peel, Stanley, Graham, Hardinge, Knatchbull, Goulburn. Of these only the last remained in his old position. Peel and Knatchbull were dead; Stanley in the Lords and separated; Graham isolated; Hardinge in the Lords and by way of having retired. Nor was the band very large even as recruited. Of ex-cabinet ministers there were but three commoners; Goulburn, Herbert, Gladstone. And of others who had held important offices there were only available, Clerk, Cardwell, Sir J. Young, H. Corry. The Lords contributed Aberdeen, Newcastle, Canning,[2] St. Germains and the Duke of Argyll. Such, as counted off by Mr. Gladstone, was the Peelite staff.

Graham in April made his own position definitely liberal, or 'whig and something more,' in so pronounced a way as to cut him off from the Gladstonian subdivision or main body of the Peelites. Mr. Gladstone read the speech in which this departure was taken, 'with discomfort and surprise.' He instantly went to read to Lord Aberdeen some of the more pungent passages; one or two consultations were held with Newcastle and Goulburn; and all agreed that Graham's words were decisive. 'I mentioned that some of them were coming to 5 Carlton Gardens in the course of the afternoon (April 20); and my first wish was that now Lord Aberdeen himself would go and tell them how we stood upon Graham's speech. To this they were all opposed; and they seemed to feel that as we had had no meeting yet, it would seem ungracious and unkind to an old friend to hold one by way of ovation over his departure. It was therefore agreed that I should acquaint Young it was their wish that he should tell any one who might come, that we, who were there

[1] Namely Palmerston, Spring-Rice, F. Baring, Charles Wood, Hobhouse, Labouchere, Lord Howick.

[2] This, of course, was Charles John Earl Canning, third son of Canning the prime minister, Mr. Gladstone's contemporary at Eton and Christ Church, and known to history as governor-general of India in the Mutiny. Stratford Canning, afterwards Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, was cousin of George Canning.

present, looked upon our political connection with Graham as dissolved by the Carlisle speech.'[1]

The temporary parting from Graham was conducted with a degree of good feeling that is a pattern for such occasions in politics. In writing to Mr. Gladstone (Mar. 29, 1852), and speaking of his colleagues in Peel's government, Graham says, 'I have always felt that my age and position were different from theirs: that the habits and connections of my early political life, though broken, gave to me a bias, which to them was not congenial; and since the death of our great master and friend, I have always feared that the time might arrive when we must separate. You intimate the decision that party connection must no longer subsist between us. I submit to your decision with regret; but at parting I hope that you will retain towards me some feelings of esteem and regard, such as I can never cease to entertain towards you; and though political friendships are often short-lived, having known each other well, we shall continue, I trust, to maintain kindly relations. It is a pleasure to me to remember that we have no cause of complaint against each other.' 'I have to thank you,' Mr. Gladstone replies, 'for the unvarying kindness of many years, to acknowledge all the advantages I have derived from communication with you, to accept and re-echo cordially your expressions of good will, and to convey the fervent hope that no act or word of mine may ever tend to impair these sentiments in my own mind or yours.'

When the others had withdrawn, Aberdeen told Mr. Gladstone that Lord John had been to call upon him the day before for the first time, and he believed that the visit had special reference to Mr. Gladstone himself. 'The tenor of his conversation,' Mr. Gladstone reports, 'was that my opinions were quite as liberal as his; that in regard to the colonies I went beyond him; that my Naples pamphlets

[1] Graham spoke of himself as a tried reformer and as a member of the liberal party, and as glad to find himself the ally of so faithful a liberal and reformer as his fellow-candidate. He would not exactly pledge himself to support the ballot, but he admitted it was a hard question, and said he was not so blind that practical experience might not convince him that he was wrong. (Mar. 26, 1852.)

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could have been called revolutionary if he had written them; and in regard to church matters he saw no reason why there should not be joint action, for he was cordially disposed to maintain the church of England, and so, he believed, was I.' Lord John, however, we may be sure was the last man not to know how many another element, besides agreement in opinion, decides relations of party. Personal sympathies and antipathies, hosts of indirect affinities having apparently little to do with the main trunk of the school or the faction, hosts of motives only half disclosed, or not disclosed at all even to him in whom they are at work — all these intrude in the composition and management of parties whether religious or political.

Grave discussions turned on new nicknames. The tories had greatly gained by calling themselves conservatives after 1832. The name of whig had some associations that were only less unpopular in the country than the name of tory. It was pointed out that many people would on no account join the whigs, who yet would join a government of which Russells, Greys, Howards, Cavendishes, Villierses, were members. On the other hand Graham declared that Paley's maxim about religion was just as true in politics — that men often change their creed, but not so often the name of their sect. And as to the suggestion, constantly made at all times in our politics for the benefit of waverers, of the name of liberal-conservative, Lord John caustically observed that whig has the convenience of expressing in one syllable what liberal-conservative expresses in seven, and whiggism in two syllables what conservative progress expresses in six.

Connected with all this arose a geographical question — in what quarter of the House were the Peelites to sit? Hitherto the two wings of the broken tory party, protectionist and Peelite, had sat together on the opposition benches. The change of administration in 1852 sent the protectionists over to the Speaker's right, and brought the whigs to the natural place of opposition on his left. The Peelite leaders therefore had no other choice than to take their seats below the gangway, but on which side? Such a question is always graver than to the heedless outsider it may seem, and the Peelite discus-

sions upon it were both copious and vehement.[1] Graham at once resolved on sharing the front opposition bench with the whigs: he repeated that his own case was different from the others, because he had once been a whig himself. Herbert, who acted pretty strictly with Mr. Gladstone all this year, argued that they only held aloof from the new ministers on one question, and therefore that they ought not to sit opposite to them as adversaries, but should sit below the gangway on the ministerial side. Newcastle intimated dissent from both, looking to the formation of his virtuous and enlightened third party, but where they should sit in the meantime he did not seem to know. Mr. Gladstone expressed from the first a decided opinion in favour of going below the gangway on the opposition side. What they ought to desire was the promotion of a government conservative in its personal composition and traditions, as soon as the crisis of protection should be over. Taking a seat, he said, is an external sign and pledge that ought to follow upon full conviction of the thing it was understood to betoken; and to sit on the front opposition bench would indicate division from the conservative government as a party, while in fact they were not divided from them as a party, but only on a single question. In the end, Graham sat above the opposition gangway next to Lord John Russell and Cardwell. The Peelite body as a whole determined on giving the new government what is called a fair trial. 'Mr. Sidney Herbert and I,' says Mr. Gladstone, 'took pains to bring them together, in the recognised modes. They sat on the opposition side, but below the gangway, full, or about forty strong; and Sir James Graham, I recollect, once complimented me on the excellent appearance they had presented to him as he passed them in walking up the House.' Considerable uneasiness was felt among some of them at finding themselves neighbours on the benches to Cobden and Bright and Hume and their friends on the one hand, and 'the Irish Brass Band' on the other.

[1] The same question greatly exercised Mr. Gladstone's mind in 1886, for the same reason, that he again hoped for the reunion of a divided party.

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It depended entirely on the Peelites whether the new government should be permitted to conduct the business of the session (subject to conditions or otherwise), or whether they should be open to an instant attack as the enemies of free trade. The effect of such attack must have been defeat, followed by dissolution forthwith, and by the ejection of the Derby government in June (as happened in 1859) instead of in December. The tactics of giving the ministers a fair trial prevailed and were faithfully adhered to, Graham and Cardwell taking their own course. As the result of this and other conditions, for ten months ministers, greatly outnumbered, were maintained in power by the deliberate and united action of about forty Peelites.

Lord Derby had opened his administration with a pledge, as the Peelites understood, to confine himself during the session to business already open and advanced, or of an urgent character. When Mr. Disraeli gave notice of a bill to dispose of four seats which were vacant, this was regarded by them as a manner of opening new and important issues, and not within the definition that had been the condition of their provisional support.[1] 'Lord John Russell came and said to me,' says Mr. Gladstone, '"What will you do?" I admitted we were bound to act; and, joining the liberals, we threw over the proposal by a large majority. This was the only occasion of conflict that arose; and it was provoked, as we thought, by the government itself.'

[1] This was a bill to assign the four disfranchised seats for Sudbury and St. Albans to the West Riding of Yorkshire and the southern division of Lancashire. Mr. Gladstone carried the order of the day by a majority of 86 against the government.

# CHAPTER VIII

## END OF PROTECTION

(*1852*)

> It is not too much to ask that now at least, after so much waste of public time, after ministries overturned and parties disorganised, the question of free trade should be placed high and dry on the shore whither the tide of political party strife could no longer reach it. — Gladstone.



The parliament was now dissolved (July 1) to decide a great question. The repeal of the corn law, the ultimate equalisation of the sugar duties, the repeal of the navigation laws, had been the three great free trade measures of the last half-dozen years, and the issue before the electors in 1852 was whether this policy was sound or unsound. Lord Derby might have faced it boldly by announcing a moderate protection for corn and for colonial sugar. Or he might have openly told the country that he had changed his mind, as Peel had changed his mind about the catholic question and about free trade, and as Mr. Disraeli was to change his mind upon franchise in 1867, and Mr. Gladstone upon the Irish church in 1868. Instead of this, all was equivocation. The Derbyite, as was well said, was protectionist in a county, neutral in a small town, free trader in a large one. He was for Maynooth in Ireland, and against it in Scotland. Mr. Disraeli did his best to mystify the agricultural elector by phrases about set-offs and compensations and relief of burdens, 'seeming to loom in the future.' He rang the changes on mysterious new principles of taxation, but what they were to be, he did not disclose. The great change since 1846 was that the working-class had become strenuous free traders. They had in earlier times never been really convinced when Cobden and Bright assured them that no fall in wages would follow

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the promised fall in the price of food. It was the experience of six years that convinced them. England alone had gone unhurt and unsinged through the fiery furnace of 1848, and nobody doubted that the stability of her institutions and the unity of her people were due to the repeal of bad laws, believed to raise the price of bread to the toilers in order to raise rents for territorial idlers.

Long before the dissolution, it was certain that Mr. Gladstone would have to fight for his seat. His letter to the Scotch bishop (see above, p. 384), his vote for the Jews, his tenacity and vehemence in resisting the bill against the pope,—the two last exhibitions in open defiance of solemn resolutions of the university convocation itself,—had alienated some friends and inflamed all his enemies. Half a score of the Heads induced Dr. Marsham, the warden of Merton, to come out. In private qualities the warden was one of the most excellent of men, and the accident of his opposition to Mr. Gladstone is no reason why we should recall transient electioneering railleries against a forgotten worthy. The political addresses of his friends depict him. They applaud his sound and manly consistency of principle and his sober attachment to the reformed church of England, and they dwell with zest on the goodness of his heart. The issue, as they put it, was simple: 'At a time when the stability of the protestant succession, the authority of a protestant Queen, and even the Christianity of the national character, have been rudely assailed by Rome on one side, and on the other by democratic associations directed against the union of the Christian church with the British constitution—at such a time, it becomes a protestant university, from which emanates a continuous stream of instruction on all ecclesiastical and Christian questions over the whole empire, to manifest the importance which it attaches to protestant truth, by the selection of a *Protestant Representative*.' The teaching residents were, as always, decisively for Gladstone, and nearly all the fellows of Merton voted against their own warden. In one respect this was remarkable, for Mr. Gladstone had in 1850 (July 18) resisted the proposal for that commission of inquiry into the universities which the Oxford

liberals had much at heart, and it would not have been surprising if they had held aloof from a candidate who had told the House of Commons that 'after all, science was but a small part of the business of education,'—a proposition that in one sense may be true, but applied to unreformed Oxford was the reverse of true. The non-residents were diligently and rather unscrupulously worked upon, and they made a formidable set of discordant elements. The evangelicals disliked Mr. Gladstone. The plain high-and-dry men distrusted him as what they called a sophist. Even some of the anglo-catholic men began to regard as a bad friend 'to the holy apostolic church of these realms, the author of the new theory of religious liberty' in the Scotch letter. They reproachfully insisted that had he headed a party in the House of Commons defending the church, not upon latitudinarian theories of religious liberty, not upon vague hints of a disaffected movement of the non-juring sort, still less upon romanising principles, but on the principles of the constitution, royal supremacy included, then the church would have escaped the worst that had befallen her since 1846. The minister would never have dared to force Hampden into the seat of a bishop. The privy council would never have reversed the court of arches in the Gorham case. The claim of the clergy to meet in convocation would never have been refused. The committee of council would have treated education very differently.[1] All came right in the end, however, and Mr. Gladstone was re-elected (July 14), receiving 260 votes fewer than Sir Robert Inglis, but 350 more than the warden of Merton.[2] We have to remember that he was not returned as a liberal.

II

The leaders of the sections out of office, when the general election was over, at once fetched forth line and plummet to take their soundings. 'The next few months,' Mr. Gladstone wrote to Lord Aberdeen (Aug. 20), 'are, I apprehend, the

[1] Charles Wordsworth, *Letter to Mr. Gladstone*, 1852, p. 50.

[2] Inglis, 1368; Gladstone, 1108; Marsham, 758.

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crisis of *our* fate, and will show whether we are equal or unequal to playing out with prudence, honour, and resolution *the drama or trilogy that has been on the stage since* 1841.' He still regarded the situation as something like a reproduction of the position of the previous March. The precise number of the ministerialists could not be ascertained until tested by a motion in the House. They had gained rather more than was expected, and some put them as high as 320, others as low as 290. What was undoubted was that Lord Derby was left in a minority, and that the support of the Peelites might any hour turn it into a majority. Notwithstanding a loss or two in the recent elections, that party still numbered not far short of 40, and Mr. Gladstone was naturally desirous of retaining it in connection with himself. Most of the group were disposed rather to support a conservative government than not, unless such a government were to do, or propose, something open to strong and definite objection. At the same time what he described as the difficulty of keeping Peelism for ever so short a space upon its legs, was as obvious to him as to everybody else. 'It will be an impossible parliament,' Graham said to Mr. Gladstone (July 15), 'parties will be found too nicely balanced to render a new line of policy practicable without a fresh appeal to the electors.' Before a fresh appeal to the electors took place, the impossible parliament had tumbled into a great war.

When the newly chosen members met in November, Mr. Disraeli told the House of Commons that 'there was no question in the minds of ministers with respect to the result of that election: there was no doubt that there was not only not a preponderating majority in favour of a change in the laws [free trade] passed in the last few years, or even of modifying them in any degree; but that on the contrary there was a decisive opinion on the part of the country that that settlement should not be disturbed.' Mr. Gladstone wrote to Lord Aberdeen (July 30) that he thought the government absolutely chained to Mr. Disraeli's next budget, and 'I, for one, am not prepared to accept him as a financial organ, or to be responsible for what he may propose in his present capacity.' Each successive speech made by Mr. Disraeli at

Aylesbury he found 'more quackish in its flavour than its predecessor.' Yet action on his own part was unavoidably hampered by Oxford. 'Were I either of opinion,' he told Lord Aberdeen (Aug. 5), 'that Lord John Russell ought to succeed Lord Derby, or prepared without any further development of the plans of the government to take my stand as one of the party opposed to them, the first step which, as a man of honour, I ought to adopt, should be to resign my seat.' 'I do not mean hereby,' he adds in words that were soon to derive forcible significance from the march of events, 'that I am unconditionally committed against any alliance or fusion, but that any such alliance or fusion, to be lawful for me, must grow out of some failure of the government in carrying on public affairs, or a disapproval of its measures when they shall have been proposed.' He still, in spite of all the misdeeds of ministers during the elections, could not think so ill of them as did Lord Aberdeen.

'Protection and religious liberty,' he wrote to Lord Aberdeen (Aug. 5), 'are the subjects on which my main complaints would turn; shuffling as to the former, trading on bigotry as to the latter. The shifting and shuffling that I complain of have been due partly to a miserably false position and the giddy prominence of inferior men; partly to the (surely not unexpected) unscrupulousness and second motives of Mr. Disraeli, at once the necessity of Lord Derby and his curse. I do not mean that this justifies what has been said and done; I only think it brings the case within the common limits of political misconduct. As for religious bigotry,' he continues, 'I condemn the proceedings of the present government; yet much less strongly than the unheard-of course pursued by Lord John Russell in 1850–1, the person to whom I am now invited to transfer my confidence.' Even on the superficial conversion of the Derbyites to free trade, Mr. Gladstone found a *tu quoque* against the whigs. 'It is, when strictly judged, an act of public immorality to form and lead an opposition on a certain plea, to succeed, and then in office to abandon it. . . . But in this view, the conduct of the present administration is the counterpart and copy of that of the whigs themselves in 1835, who ran Sir Robert

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Peel to ground upon the appropriation clause, worked it just while it suited them, and then cast it to the winds; to say nothing of their conduct on the Irish Assassination bill of 1846.'

This letter was forwarded by Aberdeen to Lord John Russell. Lord John had the peculiar temperament that is hard to agitate, but easy to nettle. So polemical a reading of former whig pranks nettled him considerably. Why, he asked, should he not say just as reasonably that Mr. Gladstone held up the whigs to odium in 1841 for stripping the farmer of adequate protection; worked the corn law of 1842 as long as it suited him; and then turned round and cast the corn law to the winds? If he gave credit to Mr. Gladstone for being sincere in 1841, 1842, and 1846, why should not Mr. Gladstone give the same credit to him? As to the principle of appropriation, he and Althorp had opposed four of their colleagues in the Grey cabinet; how could he concede to Peel what he had refused to them? As for the Irish bill on which he had turned Peel out, it was one of the worst of all coercion bills; Peel with 117 followers evidently could not carry on the government; and what sense could there have been in voting for a bad bill, in order to retain in office an impossible ministry? This smart apologia of Lord John's was hardly even plausible, much less did it cover the ground. The charge against the whigs is not that they took up appropriation, but that having taken it up they dropped it for the sake of office. Nor was it a charge that they resisted an Irish coercion bill, but that having supported it on the first reading ('worst of all coercion bills' as it was, even in the eyes of men who had passed the reckless act of 1833), they voted against it when they found that both Bentinck and the Manchester men were going to do the same, thus enabling them to turn Peel out.

Sharp sallies into the past, however, did not ease the present. It was an extraordinary situation only to be described in negatives. A majority could not be found to beat the government upon a vote of want of confidence. Nobody knew who could take their places. Lord John Russell as head of a government was impossible, for his

maladroit handling of papal aggression had alienated the Irish; his dealings with Palmerston had offended one powerful section of the English whigs; the Scottish whigs hated him as too much managed by the lights of the free church; and the radicals proscribed him as the chief of a patrician clique. Yet though he was impossible, he sometimes used language to the effect that for him to take any place save the first would be a personal degradation that would lower him to the level of Sidmouth or Goderich. Lord Palmerston represented the moderate centre of the liberal party. Even now he enjoyed a growing personal favour out of doors, not at all impaired by the bad terms on which he was known to be with the court, for the court was not at that date so popular an institution as it became by and by. Among other schemes of ingenious persons at this confused and broken time was a combination under Palmerston or Lansdowne of aristocratic whigs, a great contingent of Derbyites, and the Peelites; and before the elections it was true that Lord Derby had made overtures to these two eminent men. A Lansdowne combination lingered long in the mind of Lord Palmerston himself, who wished for the restoration of a whig government, but resented the idea of serving under its late head. Some dreamed that Palmerston and Disraeli might form a government on the basis of resistance to parliamentary reform. Strange rumours were even afloat that Mr. Gladstone's communications with Palmerston before he left London at the election had been intimate and frequent. 'I cannot make Gladstone out,' said Lord Malmesbury, 'he seems to me a dark horse.'

In the closing days of the autumn (September 12) Graham interpreted some obscure language of Mr. Gladstone's as meaning that if protection were renounced, as it might be, if Palmerston joined Derby and the government were reconstructed, and if Disraeli ceased to be leader, then his own relations with the government would be changed. Gladstone was so uneasy in his present position, so nice in the equipoise of his opinions that he wished to be, as he said, 'on the liberal side of the conservative party, rather than on the conservative side of the liberal party.' A little earlier than this,

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Lord Aberdeen and Graham agreed in thinking (August) that 'Disraeli's leadership was the great cause of Gladstone's reluctance to have anything to do with the government; . . . that even if this should be removed, it would not be very easy for him to enter into partnership with them.' Mr. Gladstone himself now and always denied that the lead in the Commons or other personal question had anything to do with the balance of his opinions at the present and later moments. Those who know most of public life are best aware how great is the need in the case of public men for charitable construction of their motives and intent. Yet it would surely have been straining charity to the point of dishonour if, within two years of Peel's death, any of those who had been attached to him as master and as friend, either Mr. Gladstone or anybody else, could have looked without reprobation and aversion on the idea of cabinet intimacy with the bitterest and least sincere of all Peel's assailants.

III

Mr. Gladstone repaired to London some weeks before the new session, and though he was not in a position to open direct relations with the government, he expressed to Lord Hardinge, with a view to its communication to Lord Derby, his strong opinion that the House of Commons would, and should, require from ministers a frank and explicit adoption of free trade through the address, and secondly, the immediate production of their financial measures. Lord Derby told Hardinge at Windsor that he thought that neither expectation was far wrong. When the Peelites met at Lord Aberdeen's to discuss tactics, they were secretly dissatisfied with the paragraphs about free trade.

Mr. Disraeli had laid down at the election the sonorous maxim, that no statesman can disregard with impunity the genius of the epoch in which he lives. And he now after the election averred that the genius of the age was in favour of free exchange. Still it was pleasanter to swallow the dose with as little public observation as possible. 'What would have been said,' cried Lord Derby in fervid remonstrance, 'if

shortly after catholic emancipation and the reform bill had been admitted as settlements, their friends had come down and insisted not only that the Houses of parliament should consent to act on the new policy they had adopted, but should expressly recant their opinion in favour of the policy that had formerly prevailed? What would the friends of Sir R. Peel have said in 1835 if, when he assumed the government and when the new parliament assembled, he had been called upon to declare that the reform bill was wise, just, and necessary?' The original free traders were not disposed to connive at Derbyite operations any more than were the whigs. Notice was at once given by Mr. Villiers of a motion virtually assailing the ministers, by asserting the doctrine of free trade in terms they could not adopt. 'Now,' says Mr. Gladstone, 'we came to a case in which the liberals did that which had been done by the government in the case of the Four Seats bill; that is to say, they raised an issue which placed us against them. Lord Palmerston moved the amendment which defeated the attack, but he did this at the express request of S. Herbert and mine, and we carried the amendment to him at his house. He did not recommend any particular plan of action, and he willingly acquiesced in and adopted ours.' He said he would convey it to Disraeli, 'with whom,' he said, 'I have had communications from time to time.'

In the debate (Nov. 26) upon the two rival amendments — that of Mr. Villiers, which the ministers could not accept, and that of Palmerston, which they could — Sidney Herbert paid off some old scores in a speech full of fire and jubilation; Mr. Gladstone, on the other hand, was elaborately pacific. He earnestly deprecated the language of severity and exasperation, or anything that would tend to embitter party warfare. His illustrious leader Peel, he said, did indeed look for his revenge; but for what revenge did he look? Assuredly not for stinging speeches, assuredly not for motions made in favour of his policy, if they carried pain and degradation to the minds of honourable men. Were they not celebrating the obsequies of an obnoxious policy? Let them cherish no desire to trample on those who had fought manfully and

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been defeated fairly. Rather let them rejoice in the great public good that had been achieved; let them take courage from the attainment of that good, for the performance of their public duty in future. All this was inspired by the strong hope of conservative reunion. 'Nervous excitement kept me very wakeful after speaking,' says Mr. Gladstone, 'the first time for many years.' (*Diary.*)

Villiers's motion was rejected by 336 to 256, the Peelites and Graham voting with ministers in the majority. The Peelite amendment in moderated terms, for which Palmerston stood sponsor, was then carried against the radicals by 468 to 53. For the moment the government was saved.

This evening, Mr. Gladstone writes on the next day, Nov. 27, I went to Lady Derby's evening party, where Lord Derby took me a little aside and said he must take the opportunity of thanking me for the tone of my speech last night, which he thought tended to place the discussion on its right footing. It was evident from his manner, and Lady Derby's too, that they were highly pleased with the issue of it. I simply made my acknowledgments in terms of the common kind, upon which he went on to ask me what in my view was to happen next? The great object, he said, was to get rid of all personal questions, and to consider how all those men who were united in their general views of government might combine together to carry on with effect. For himself he felt both uncertain and indifferent; he might be able to carry on the government or he might not; but the question lay beyond that, by what combination or arrangement of a satisfactory nature, in the event of his displacement, the administration of public affairs could be conducted.

To this I replied, that it seemed to me that *our* situation (meaning that of Herbert, Goulburn, and others, with myself) in relation to his government remained much as it was in March and April last. . . . We have to expect your budget, and the production of that is the next step. He replied that he much desired to see whether there was a possibility of any *rapprochement*, and seemed to glance at personal considerations as likely perhaps to stand in the way [Disraeli, presumably]. I said in reply, that no doubt there were many difficulties of a personal nature to be

faced in conceiving of any ministerial combination when we looked at the present House of Commons: many men of power and eminence, but great difficulties arising from various causes, present and past relations, incompatibilities, peculiar defects of character, or failure in bringing them into harmony. I said that, as to relations of parties, circumstances were often stronger than the human will; that we must wait for their guiding, and follow it. . . . He said, rather decidedly, that he assented to the truth of this doctrine. He added, 'I think Sidney said more last night than he intended, did he not?' I answered, 'You mean as to one particular expression or sentence?' He rejoined, 'Yes.'[1] I said, 'I have had no conversation with him on it, but I think it very probable that he grew warm and went beyond his intention at that point; at the same time, I think I ought to observe to you that I am confident that expression was occasioned by one particular preceding speech in the debate.' He gave a significant assent, and seemed to express no surprise.

IV

The respite for ministers was short. The long day of shadowy promises and delusive dreams was over; and the oracular expounder of mysteries was at last gripped by the hard realities of the taxes. Whigs and Peelites, men who had been at the exchequer and men who hoped to be, were all ready at last to stalk down their crafty quarry. Without delay Disraeli presented his budget (Dec. 3). As a private member in opposition he had brought forward many financial proposals, but it now turned out that none of them was fit for real use. With a serene audacity that accounts for some of Mr. Gladstone's repulsion, he told the House that he had greater subjects to consider 'than the triumph of obsolete opinions.' His proposals dazzled for a day, and then were seen to be a scheme of illusory compensations and

[1] I suppose this refers to a passage about Mr. Disraeli:—'For my part I acquit the chancellor of the exchequer, so far as his own convictions are concerned, of the charge of having ever been a protectionist. I never for one moment thought he believed in the least degree in protection. I do not accuse him of having forgotten what he said or what he believed in those years. I only accuse him of having forgotten now what he then wished it to appear that he believed.' The same speech contains a whimsical reason why the Jews make no converts, which the taste of our more democratic House would certainly not tolerate.

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dislocated expedients. He took off half of the malt-tax and half of the hop duty, and in stages reduced the tea duty from two shillings and twopence to one shilling. More important, he broke up the old frame of the income-tax by a variation of its rates, and as for the house-tax, he doubled its rate and extended its area. In one of his fragmentary notes, Mr. Gladstone says: —

> Having run away from protection, as it was plain from the first they would do, they had little to offer the land, but that little their minority was ready to accept. It was a measure essentially bad to repeal half the malt duty. But the flagrantly vicious element in Disraeli's budget was his proposal to reduce the income-tax on schedule D. to fivepence in the pound, leaving the other schedules at sevenpence. This was no compensation to the land; but, inasmuch as to exempt one is to tax another, it was a distinct addition to the burdens borne by the holders of visible property. It was on Disraeli's part a most daring bid for the support of the liberal majority, for we all knew quite well that the current opinion of the whigs and liberals was in favour of this scheme; which, on the other hand, was disapproved by sound financiers. The authority of Pitt and Peel, and then my own study of the subject, made me believe that it was impracticable, and probably meant the disruption of the tax, with confusion in finance, as an immediate sequitur. What angered me was that Disraeli had never examined the question. And I afterwards found that he had not even made known his intentions to the board of inland revenue. The gravity of the question thus raised made me feel that the day was come to eject the government.

It was upon the increase of the house-tax that the great battle was finally staked. Mr. Gladstone's letters to his wife at Hawarden bring the rapid and excited scenes vividly before us.

> 6 *Carlton Gardens, Dec.* 3, 1852. — I write from H. of C. at 4½ just expecting the budget. All seem to look for startling and dangerous proposals. You will read them in the papers of to-morrow, be they what they may. If there is anything outrageous, we may protest at once; but I do not expect any extended debate to-night. . . . The rush for places in the H. of C. is immense.

CHAP. VIII.

ÆT. 43.

*Monday, Dec.* 6. — On Saturday, in the early part of the day, I had a return, perhaps caused by the damp relaxing weather, of the neuralgic pain in my face, and in the afternoon a long sitting at Lord Aberdeen's about the budget, during which strange to say my pain disappeared, but which kept me past the ordinary post hour. These were the causes of your having no letter. The said budget will give rise to serious difficulties. It is plain enough that when its author announced something looming in the distance, he did not mean this plan but something more extensive. Even his reduced scheme, however, includes fundamental faults of principle which it is impossible to overlook or compound with. The first day of serious debate on it will be Friday next, and a vote will be taken either then or on Monday.

*Dec.* 8. — Be sure to read Lord Derby's speech on Monday. His reference to the cause of his quarrel with Lord George Bentinck was most striking, and is interpreted as a rap at Disraeli.[1] I have had a long sit with Lord Aberdeen to-day talking over possibilities. The government, I believe, talk confidently about the decision on the house-tax, but I should doubt whether they are right. Meantime I am convinced that Disraeli's is the least conservative budget I have ever known.

*Dec.* 14. — I need hardly say the vision of going down to-morrow has been dissolved. It has been arranged that I am not to speak until the close of the debate; and it is considered almost certain to go on till Monday. Ministers have become much less confident, but I understand that some, I know not how many, of Lord John's men are not to be relied on. Whether they win or not (I expect the latter, but my opinion is *naught*) they cannot carry this house-tax nor their budget. But the mischief of the proposals they have launched will not die with them.

*Dec.* 15. — I write in great haste. Though it is Wednesday, I have been down at the House almost all day to unravel a device of Disraeli's about the manner in which the question is to be put, by which he means to catch votes; and *I think* after full consultation

[1] 'The only serious misunderstanding I ever had with my noble and lamented friend Lord George Bentinck, which I am happy to say was thoroughly removed before his untimely death — was upon a full and frank expression of my opinion that nothing could be more unfitting nor more impolitic than to load with terms of vituperation those from whom we are compelled conscientiously to differ' (*Dec.* 6).

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with Mahon and Wilson Patten, that this will be accomplished. The debate may close to-morrow night. I am sorry to say I have a long speech fermenting in me, and I feel as a loaf might in the oven. The government, it is thought, are likely to be beaten.

*Dec.* 16. — I have been engaged in the House till close on post time. Disraeli trying to wriggle out of the question, and get it put upon words without meaning, to enable more to vote as they please, *i.e.* his men or those favourably inclined to him. But he is beaten in this point, and we have now the right question before us. It is not now quite certain whether we shall divide to-night; I hope we may, for it is weary work sitting with a speech fermenting inside one.[1]

*Dec.* 18. — I have never gone through so exciting a passage of parliamentary life. The intense efforts which we made to obtain, and the government to escape, a definite issue, were like a fox chase, and prepared us all for excitement. I came home at seven, dined, read for a quarter of an hour, and actually contrived (only think) to sleep in the fur cloak for another quarter of an hour; got back to the House at nine. Disraeli rose at 10.20 [Dec. 16], and from that moment, of course, I was on tenterhooks, except when his superlative acting and brilliant oratory from time to time absorbed me and made me quite *forget* that I had to follow him. He spoke until one. His speech as a whole was grand; I think the most powerful I ever heard from him. At the same time it was disgraced by shameless personalities and otherwise; I had therefore to begin by attacking him for these. There was a question whether it would not be too late, but when I heard his personalities I felt there was no choice but to go on. My great object was to show the conservative party how their leader was hoodwinking and bewildering them, and this I have the happiness of believing that in some degree I effected; for while among some there was great heat and a disposition to interrupt me when they could, I could *see* in the faces and demeanour of others quite other

[1] 'We had a preliminary debate to have the whole resolution put, instead of the preamble only, which was ultimately agreed to, and placed the question more fairly before the public, Disraeli making the extraordinary declaration that though the proposal was for doubling the house-tax, nobody was bound by that vote to do so. It was an attempt at a shuffle in order to catch votes from his own people, and to a certain extent it succeeded.' — *Halifax Papers*, 1852.

feelings expressed. But it was a most difficult operation, and altogether it might have been better effected. The House has not I think been so much excited for years. The power of his speech, and the importance of the issue, combined with the lateness of the hour, which always operates, were the causes. My brain was strung very high, and has not yet quite got back to calm, but I slept well last night. On Thursday night [*i.e.* Friday morning] after two hours of sleep, I awoke, and remembered a gross omission I had made, which worked upon me so that I could not rest any more. And still, of course, the time is an anxious one, and I wake with the consciousness of it, but I am very well and really not unquiet. When I came home from the House, I thought it would be good for me to be mortified. Next morning I opened the *Times*, which I thought *you* would buy, and *was* mortified when I saw it did not contain my speech but a mangled abbreviation. Such is human nature, at least mine. But in the *Times* of to-day you will see a very curious article descriptive of the last scene of the debate. It has evidently been written by a man who must have seen what occurred, or been informed by those who did see. He by no means says too much in praise of Disraeli's speech. I am told he is much stung by what I said. I am very sorry it fell to me to say it; God knows I have no wish to give him pain; and really with my deep sense of his gifts I would only pray they might be well used.

The writer in the *Times* to whom the victorious orator here refers describes how, 'like two of Sir Walter Scott's champions, these redoubtable antagonists gathered up all their force for the final struggle, and encountered each other in mid-career; how, rather equal than like, each side viewed the struggle of their chosen athletes, as if to prognosticate from the war of words the fortunes of two parties so nicely balanced and marshalled in apparently equal array. Mr. Disraeli's speech,' he says, 'was in every respect worthy of his oratorical reputation. The retorts were pointed and bitter, the hits telling, the sarcasm keen, the argument in many places cogent, in all ingenious, and in some convincing. The merits were counterbalanced by no less glaring defects of tone, temper, and feeling. In some passages

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invective was pushed to the limit of virulence, and in others, meant no doubt to relieve them by contrast, the coarser stimulants to laughter were very freely applied. Occasionally whole sentences were delivered with an artificial voice and a tone of studied and sardonic bitterness, peculiarly painful to the audience, and tending greatly to diminish the effect of this great intellectual and physical effort. The speech of Mr. Gladstone was in marked contrast. It was characterised throughout by the most earnest sincerity. It was pitched in a high tone of moral feeling — now rising to indignation, now sinking to remonstrance — which was sustained throughout without flagging and without effort. The language was less ambitious, less studied, but more natural and flowing than that of Mr. Disraeli; and though commencing in a tone of stern rebuke, it ended in words of almost pathetic expostulation. . . . That power of persuasion which seems entirely denied to his antagonist, Mr. Gladstone possesses to great perfection, and to judge by the countenances of his hearers, those powers were very successfully exerted. He had, besides, the immense advantage resulting from the tone of moral superiority which he assumed and successfully maintained, and which conciliated to him the goodwill of his audience in a degree never attained by the most brilliant sallies of his adversary, and when he concluded the House might well feel proud of him and of themselves.'

A violent thunderstorm raged during the debate, but the excited senators neither noticed the flashes of lightning nor heard a tremendous shock of thunder. A little before four o'clock in the morning (Dec. 17), the division was taken, and ministers were beaten by nineteen (305 to 286). 'There was an immense crowd,' says Macaulay, 'a deafening cheer when Hayter took the right hand of the row of tellers, and a still louder cheer when the numbers were read.'[1]

A small incident occurred a few nights later to show that it was indeed high time to abate the passions of these six years and more. A politician of secondary rank had been accused of bribery at Derby, and a band of tory friends thought the

[1] Trevelyan, ii. p. 331.

moment opportune to give him a banquet at the Carlton. Mr. Gladstone in another room was harmlessly reading the paper. Presently in came the revellers, began to use insulting language, and finally vowed that he ought to be pitched headlong out of the window into the Reform. Mr. Gladstone made some courteous reply, but as the reporter truly says, courtesy to gentry in this humour was the casting of pearls before swine. Eventually they ordered candles in another room, and left him to himself.[1] 'You will perhaps,' he wrote to his wife, 'see an account of a row at the Carlton in which I have taken no harm.' The affair indeed was trivial, but it illustrates a well-known and striking reflection of Cornewall Lewis upon the assault perpetrated on Sumner in the Senate at Washington by Brooks. 'That outrage,' he said, 'is no proof of brutal manners or low morality in Americans; it is the first blow in a civil war. . . . If Peel had proposed a law not only reducing rents, but annihilating them, instead of being attacked by a man of words like Disraeli, he would have been attacked with physical arguments by some man of blows.'[2]

In point of numbers the stroke given to protection was not tremendous, but as the history of half a century has shown, it was adequate and sufficient, and Lord Derby at once resigned. He did not take his defeat well. 'Strange to say,' Mr. Gladstone wrote to his wife, 'Lord Derby has been making a most petulant and intemperate speech in the House of Lords on his resignation; such that Newcastle was obliged to rise after him and contradict the charge of combination; while nothing could be better in temper, feeling, and judgment than Disraeli's farewell.' Derby angrily divided the combination that had overthrown him into, first, various gradations of liberalism from 'high aristocratic and exclusive whigs down to the extremest radical theorists'; second, Irish ultramontanes; and lastly, a party of some thirty or thirty-five gentlemen 'of great personal worth, of great eminence and respectability, possessing considerable official experience and a large amount of talent—who once professed, and I believe do still profess, conservative opinions.'

[1] *Times*, Dec. 23, 1852. [2] *Letters*, p. 315.

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Mr. Disraeli, on the contrary, with infinite polish and grace asked pardon for the flying words of debate, and drew easy forgiveness from the member whom a few hours before he had mocked as 'a weird sibyl'; the other member whom he would not say he greatly respected, but whom he greatly regarded; and the third member whom he bade learn that petulance is not sarcasm, and insolence is not invective. Lord John Russell congratulated him on the ability and the gallantry with which he had conducted the struggle, and so the curtain fell. The result, as the great newspaper put it with journalistic freedom, was 'not merely the victory of a battle, but of a war; not a reverse, but a conquest. The vanquished have no principles which they dare to assert, no leaders whom they can venture to trust.'

# Book IV

*1853–1859*

## CHAPTER I

### THE COALITION

(*1853*)

> The materials necessary for a sound judgment of facts are not found in the success or failure of undertakings; exact knowledge of the situation that has provoked them forms no inconsiderable element of history. — Metternich.



England was unconsciously on the eve of a violent break in the peace that had been her fortunate lot for nearly forty years. To the situation that preceded this signal event, a judicious reader may well give his attention. Some of the particulars may seem trivial. In countries governed by party, what those out of the actualities of the fray reckon trivial often count for much, and in the life of a man destined to be a conspicuous party leader, to pass them by would be to leave out real influences.

The first experiment in providing the country with a tory government had failed. That alliance between whig and Peelite which Lord John the year before had been unable to effect, had become imperative, and at least a second experiment was to be tried. The initial question was who should be head of the new government. In August, Lord Aberdeen had written to Mr. Gladstone in anticipation of the Derbyite defeat: 'If high character and ability only were required, *you* would be the person; but I am aware that for the present at least this would not be practicable. Whether it would be possible for Newcastle or me to undertake the concern is more than I can say.' Other good reasons apart,

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it is easy to see that Mr. Gladstone's attitude in things ecclesiastical put him out of court, and though he had made a conspicuous mark not only, as Lord Aberdeen said, by character and ability but by liberality of view especially in the region of colonial reform, still he had as yet had no good opportunity for showing an independent capacity for handling great affairs.

Not any less impossible was Lord John. Shortly before the occasion arose, a whig intimate told him plainly that reconstruction on the basis of his old government was out of the question. 'Lord John's answer was a frank acceptance of that opinion; and he was understood to say that the composition of the next government must be mainly from the ranks of the Peelites; he evidently looked forward to being a member of it, but not the head. When various persons were named as possible heads, Lord Aberdeen was distinctly approved, Graham was distinctly rejected, Newcastle was mentioned without any distinct opinion expressed. We [Aberdeen and Gladstone] were both alike at a loss to know whether Lord John had changed his mind, or had all along since his resignation been acting with this view. All his proceedings certainly seem to require an opposite construction, and to contemplate his own leadership.'[1]

Lord Palmerston was determined not to serve again under a minister who had with his own hand turned him out of office, and of whose unfitness for the first post he was at the moment profoundly convinced. He told a Peelite friend that Lord John's love of popularity would always lead him into scrapes, and that his way of suddenly announcing new policies (Durham letter and Edinburgh letter) without consulting colleagues, could not be acquiesced in. Besides the hostility of Palmerston and his friends, any government with the writer of the Durham letter at its head must have the hostility of the Irishmen to encounter. The liberal attitude of the Peelites on the still smouldering question of papal aggression gave Aberdeen a hold on the Irish such as nobody else could have.

Another man of great eminence in the whig party might

[1] Memo. by Mr. Gladstone of a conversation with Aberdeen.

have taken the helm, but Lord Lansdowne was seventy-two, and was supposed to have formally retired from office for ever. The leader of the Peelites visited the patrician whig at Lansdowne House, and each begged the other to undertake the uncoveted post. Lord Aberdeen gave a slow assent. Previously understanding from Lord John that he would join, Aberdeen accepted the Queen's commission to form a government. He had a harassed week. At first the sun shone. 'Lord John consents,' wrote Mr. Gladstone to his wife at Hawarden, 'and has behaved very well. Palmerston refuses, which is a serious blow. To-morrow I think we shall get to detailed arrangements, about which I do not expect extraordinary difficulty. But I suppose Palmerston is looking to become the leader of a Derby opposition ; and without him, or rather with him between us and the conservatives, I cannot but say the game will be a very difficult one to play. It is uncertain whether I shall be chancellor of the exchequer or secretary for the colonies ; one of the two I think certainly ; and the exchequer will certainly come to Graham or me.'

Within a few hours angry squalls all but capsized the boat. Lord John at first had sought consolation in an orthodox historical parallel—the case of Mr. Fox, though at the head of the largest party, leading the Commons under Lord Grenville as head of the government. Why should he, then, refuse a position that Fox had accepted? But friends, often in his case the most mischievous of advisers, reminded him what sort of place he would hold in a cabinet in which the chief posts were filled by men not of his own party. Lord John himself thought, from memories of Bishop Hampden and other ecclesiastical proceedings, that Mr. Gladstone would be his sharpest opponent. Then as the days passed, he found deposition from first place to second more bitter than he had expected. Historic and literary consolation can seldom be a sure sedative against the stings of political ambition. He changed his mind every twelve hours, and made infinite difficulties. When these were with much travail appeased, difficulties were made on behalf of others. The sacred caste and their adherents were up in arms, and a

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bitter cry arose that all the good things were going to the Peelites, only the leavings to the whigs. Lord John doubtless remembered what Fox had said when the ministry of All the Talents was made, — 'We are three in a bed.' Disraeli now remarked sardonically, 'The cake is too small.' To realise the scramble, the reader may think of the venerable carp that date from Henry IV. and Sully, struggling for bread in the fish-ponds of the palace of Fontainebleau. The whigs of this time were men of intellectual refinement; they had a genuine regard for good government, and a decent faith in reform; but when we chide the selfishness of machine politicians hunting office in modern democracy, let us console ourselves by recalling the rapacity of our oligarchies. 'It is melancholy,' muses Sir James Graham this Christmas in his journal, 'to see how little fitness for office is regarded on all sides, and how much the public employments are treated as booty to be divided among successful combatants.'

From that point of view, the whig case was strong. 'Of 330 members of the House of Commons,' wrote Lord John to Aberdeen, '270 are whig and radical, thirty are Irish brigade, thirty are Peelites. To this party of thirty you propose to give seven seats in cabinet, to the whigs and radicals five, to Lord Palmerston one.' In the end there were six whigs, as many Peelites, and one radical. The case of four important offices out of the cabinet was just as heartrending: three were to go to the thirty Peelites, and one to the two hundred and seventy just persons. 'I am afraid,' cried Lord John, 'that the liberal party will never stand this, and that the storm will overwhelm me.' Whig pride was deeply revolted at subjection to a prime minister whom in their drawing-rooms they mocked as an old tory. In the Aberdeen cabinet, says Mr. Gladstone, 'it may be thought that the whigs, whose party was to supply five-sixths or seven-eighths of our supporters, had less than their due share of power. It should, however, be borne in mind that they had at this juncture in some degree the character of an used up, and so far a discredited, party. Without doubt they were sufferers from their ill-conceived and mischievous Ecclesiastical Titles Act. Whereas we, the

Peelites had been for six and a half years out of office, and had upon us the gloss of freshness.'

Lord Palmerston refused to join the coalition, on the honourable ground that for many years he and Aberdeen had stood at the antipodes to one another in the momentous department of foreign affairs. In fact he looked in another direction. If the Aberdeen-Russell coalition broke down, either before they began the journey or very soon after, Lord Derby might come back with a reconstructed team, with Palmerston leading in the Commons a centre party that should include the Peelites. He was believed to have something of this kind in view when he consented to move the amendment brought to him by Gladstone and Herbert in November, and he was bitterly disappointed at the new alliance of that eminent pair with Lord John. With the tories he was on excellent terms. Pall Mall was alive with tales of the anger and disgust of the Derbyites against Mr. Disraeli, who had caused them first to throw over their principles and then to lose their places. The county constituencies and many conservative boroughs were truly reported to be sick of the man who had promised marvels as 'looming in the future,' and then like a bad jockey had brought the horse upon its knees. Speculative minds cannot but be tempted to muse upon the difference that the supersession by Lord Palmerston of this extraordinary genius at that moment might have made, both to the career of Disraeli himself, and to the nation of which he one day became for a space the supreme ruler. Cobden and Bright let it be understood that they were not candidates for office. 'Our day has not come yet,' Bright said to Graham, and the representative of the radicals in the cabinet was Sir William Molesworth. In their newspaper the radicals wrote rather stiffly and jealously. In the end Lord Palmerston changed his mind and joined.

It was three days before the post of the exchequer was filled. Mr. Gladstone in his daily letter to Hawarden writes: 'At headquarters I understand they say, "Mr. G. destroyed the budget, so he ought to make a new one." However we are trying to press Graham into that service.' The next day it

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was settled. From Osborne a letter had come to Lord Aberdeen: 'The Queen hopes it may be possible to give the chancellorship of the exchequer to Mr. Gladstone, and to secure the continuance of Lord St. Leonards as chancellor.'[1] Notwithstanding the royal wish, 'we pressed it,' says Mr. Gladstone, 'on Graham, but he refused point blank.' Graham, as we know, was the best economist in the administration of Peel, and Mr. Gladstone's frequent references to him in later times on points of pure finance show the value set upon his capacity in this department. His constitutional dislike of high responsibility perhaps intervened. Mr. Gladstone himself would cheerfully have returned to the colonial office, but the whigs suspected the excesses of his colonial liberalism, and felt sure that he would sow the tares of anglicanism in these virgin fields. So before Christmas day came, Mr. Gladstone accepted what was soon in influence the second post in the government,[2] and became chancellor of the exchequer.

Say what they would, the parliamentary majority was unstable as water. His own analysis of the House of Commons gave 270 British liberals, not very compact, and the radical wing of them certain to make occasions of combination against the government, especially in finance. The only other party avowing themselves general supporters of the government were the forty Peelites — for at that figure he estimated them. The ministry, therefore, were in a minority, and a portion even of that minority not always to be depended on. The remainder of the House he divided into forty Irish brigaders, bent on mischief; from fifty to eighty conservatives, not likely to join in any factious vote, and not ill-disposed to the government, but not to be counted on either for attendance or confidence; finally, the Derby opposition, from 200 to 250, ready to follow Mr. Disraeli into any combination for turning out the government. 'It thus appears, if we strike out the fifty conservatives faintly

[1] The practical impossibility of retaining this learned man, the Derbyite chancellor, upon the coalition woolsack, is an illustration of the tenacity of the modern party system.

[2] It was not until the rise of Mr. Gladstone that a chancellor of the exchequer, not being prime minister, stood at this high level.

favourable, that we have a government with 310 supporters, liable on occasions, which frequently arise, to heavy deductions; with an opposition of 290 (Derbyites and brigaders), most of them ready to go all lengths. Such a government cannot be said to possess the confidence of the House of Commons in the full constitutional sense.'

The general course seemed smooth. Palmerston had gone to the harmless department of home affairs. The international airs were still. But a cabinet finally composed of six Peelites, six whigs, and a radical, was evidently open to countless internal hazards. 'We shall all look strangely at each other,' one of them said, 'when we first meet in cabinet.' Graham describes them as a powerful team that would need good driving. 'There are some odd tempers and queer ways among them; but on the whole they are gentlemen, and they have a perfect gentleman at their head, who is honest and direct, and who will not brook insincerity in others.' The head of the new government described it to a friend as 'a great experiment, hitherto unattempted, and of which the success must be considered doubtful, but in the meantime the public had regarded it with singular favour.' To the King of the Belgians, Aberdeen wrote: 'England will occupy her true position in Europe as the constant advocate of moderation and peace'; and to Guizot, that 'the position which we desired so see England occupy among the nations of Europe, was to act the part of a moderator, and by reconciling differences and removing misunderstandings to preserve harmony and peace.'

I have seen no more concise analysis of the early position of the coalition government than that by one of the ablest and most experienced members of the whig party, not himself a candidate for office:—

'It is strong,' Sir Francis Baring wrote to his son, 'in personal talent; none that I can remember stronger, though the head of the government is untried. It is strong in one point of view: as to public feeling. The country, I believe, wanted a moderate liberal government, and a fusion of liberal conservatives and moderate liberals. It is weak in the feelings of the component

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parts: Palmerston is degraded, Gladstone will struggle for power, Lord John cannot be comfortable. It is weak in the discordant antecedents of the cabinet; they must all make some sacrifices and work uncomfortably. It is weak in the support. I do not mean the numbers, but the class of supporters. The Peelites are forty; they will have the liberals on the one side and the conservatives on the other. The whigs of the cabinet will be anxious to satisfy the former; the Peelites (Gladstone especially) the other. They are weak in their church views. The protestants look on those who voted against the Aggression bill with distrust; the evangelicals on Gladstone and S. Herbert with dislike. I don't pretend to be a prophet, but it is always well to put down what you expect and to compare these expectations with results. My conjecture is that Gladstone will, before long, leave the government or that he will break it up.'[1]

Long afterwards Mr. Gladstone himself said this of the coalition: —

I must say of this cabinet of Lord Aberdeen's that in its deliberations it never exhibited the marks of its dual origin. Sir W. Molesworth, its radical member, seemed to be practically rather nearer in colour to the Peelites than to the whigs. There were some few idiosyncrasies without doubt. Lord Palmerston, who was home secretary, had in him some tendencies which might have been troublesome, but for a long time were not so. It is, for instance, a complete error to suppose that he asked the cabinet to treat the occupation of the Principalities as a *casus belli*. Lord Russell shook the position of Lord Aberdeen by action most capricious and unhappy. But with the general course of affairs this had no connection; and even in the complex and tortuous movements of the Eastern negotiations, the cabinet never fell into two camps. That question and the war were fatal to it. In itself I hardly ever saw a cabinet with greater promise of endurance.

II

Acceptance of office vacated the Oxford seat, and the day after Christmas a thunderbolt fell upon the new chancellor

[1] From the Baring papers, for which I am indebted to the kindness of Lord Northbrook.

of the exchequer from his friend, the militant archdeacon of Taunton. 'I wish to use few words,' Denison wrote, 'where every word I write is so bitterly distressing to me, and must be little less so, I cannot doubt, to yourself and to many others whom I respect and love. I have to state to you, as one of your constituents, that from this time I can place no confidence in you as representative of the university of Oxford, or as a public man.' Mr. Gladstone's protestations that church patronage would be as safe in Lord Aberdeen's hands as in Lord Derby's; that his own past history dispensed with the necessity of producing other assurances of his own fidelity; that his assumption of office could not shake it — all these were vain in face of the staring and flagrant fact that he would henceforth be the intimate and partner in council of Lord John Russell, the latitudinarian, the erastian, the appropriationist, the despoiler; and worse still, of Molesworth, sometimes denounced as a Socinian, sometimes as editor of the atheist Hobbes, but in either case no fit person to dispense the church patronage of the duchy of Lancaster. Only a degree less shocking was the thought of the power of filling bishoprics and deaneries by a prime minister himself a presbyterian. No guarantee that the member for Oxford might have taken against aggression upon the church, or for the concession of her just claims, was worth a feather when weighed against the mere act of a coalition so deadly as this.

It was an awkward fact for Mr. Gladstone's canvassers that Lord Derby had stated that his defeat was the result of a concert or combination between the Peelites and other political parties. Mr. Gladstone himself saw no reason why this should cause much soreness among his Oxford supporters. 'No doubt,' he said, 'they will remember that I avowed before and during the last election a wish to find the policy and measures of the government such as would justify me in giving them my support. That wish I sincerely entertained. But the main question was whether the concert or combination alleged to have taken place for the purpose of ejecting Lord Derby's government from office was fact or fiction. I have not the slightest hesitation in

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stating to you that it is a fiction. Evidence for the only presumption in its favour was this — that we voted against the budget of Mr. Disraeli in strict conformity with every principle of finance we had professed through our political lives and with the policy of former finance ministers from the time of Mr. Pitt, against the "new principles" and "new policies" which Mr. Disraeli declared at Aylesbury his intention to submit to the House of Commons — a pledge which I admit that he completely redeemed.'[1]

All this was true enough, but what people saw was that the first fruits of the victory were a coalition with the whigs, who by voting with Villiers had from the first shown their predetermination against ministers. As Northcote humorously said, Mary Stuart could never get over the presumption which her marriage with Bothwell immediately raised as to the nature of her previous connection with him. It is hard to deny that, as the world goes, the Oxford tories clerical and lay might think they had a case. Lord Derby was the tory minister, and Mr. Gladstone had been a chief instrument in turning him out. That was the one salient fact, and the political flock is often apt to see a thing with a more single eye than their shepherds.

A candidate was found in Mr. Perceval, son of the tory prime minister who had met a tragic death forty years before. The country clergy were plied with instigations and solicitations, public and private. No absurdity was too monstrous to set afloat. Mr. Gladstone had seceded to the episcopal church of Scotland. He had long ceased to be a communicant. He was on close and intimate terms with Cardinal Wiseman. He had incited the pope to persecute protestants at Florence. In this vein a flight of angry articles and circulars descended on every parsonage where there was an Oxford master of arts with his name still on the university books. At the beginning the enemy by a rush were in a majority, but they were speedily beaten out of it. At the end of six days, in spite of frenzied efforts, no more than 1330 votes out of a constituency of 3600 had been recorded. Still the indomitable men insisted on the legal right of keeping the

[1] *Times*, December 23, 1852.

poll open for fifteen days, and learned persons even gloomily hinted that the time might be extended to forty days. In the end (Jan. 20) Mr. Gladstone had 1022 votes against Perceval's 898, or a narrow majority of 124. The tory press justly consoled themselves by calculating that such a majority was only six per cent. of the votes polled, but they were very angry with the failure of the protestant electors in doing their patriotic duty against 'the pro-romanist candidate.' The organ of the Peelites, on the other hand, was delighted at the first verdict thus gained from the most influential constituency in Great Britain, in favour of the new experiment of conservative-liberalism and wise and rational progress. Graham said, and truly, that 'though Gladstone's defeat at that precise juncture would have been a misfortune, yet for his own sake hereafter, emancipation from the thraldom of that constituency would be a blessing. It is a millstone under which even Peel would have sunk.'

Was Mr. Gladstone right in his early notion of himself as a slow moving mind? Would it be true to say that, compared with Pitt, for instance, he ripened slowly? Or can we accurately describe him as having in any department of life, thought, knowledge, feeling, been precocious? Perhaps not. To speak of slowness in a man of such magical rapidity of intellectual apprehension would be indeed a paradox, but we have seen already how when he is walking in the middle path of his years, there is a sense in which he was slow in character and motion. Slowness explains some qualities in his literary and oratorical form, which was often, and especially up to our present period, vague, ambiguous, and obscure. The careless and the uncharitable set all down to sophistry. Better observers perceived that his seeming mystifications were in fact the result of a really embarrassed judgment. They pointed out that where the way was clear, as in free trade, colonial government, dissenters' chapels, Jewish disabilities, catholic bishopries, nobody could run more straight, at higher speed, or with more powerful stride. They began to say that in spite of Russells, Palmerstons, Grahams, Mr. Gladstone, after all, was the least unlikely of them 'to turn

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out a thoroughgoing man of the people.' These anticipations of democracy there is no sign that Mr. Gladstone himself, in the smallest degree, shared. The newspapers, meanwhile, were all but unanimous in declaring that 'if experience, talent, industry, and virtue, are the attributes required for the government of this empire,' then the coalition government would be one of the best that England had ever seen.

III

Mr. Gladstone's dislike and distrust of the intrusion not only of the rude secular arm, but of anything temporal into the sphere of spiritual things, had been marked enough in the old days of battle at Oxford between the tractarians and the heads, though it was less manifest in the Gorham case. In 1853 he found occasion for an honourable exhibition of the same strong feeling. Maurice had got into trouble with the authorities at King's College by essays in which he was taken to hold that the eternity of the future torment of the wicked is a superstition not warranted by the Thirty-nine Articles. A movement followed in the council of the college to oust Maurice from his professorial chair. Mr. Gladstone took great pains to avert the stroke, and here is the story as he told it to his brother-in-law, Lord Lyttelton : —

*To Lord Lyttelton.*

*Oct.* 29, 1853. — I remained in town last Thursday in order to attend the council of K.C., and as far as I could, to see fair play. I was afraid of a very precipitous proceeding, and I regret to say my fears have been verified. The motion carried was the Bishop of London's, but I am bound to say he was quite willing to have waived it for another course, and the proceeding is due to a body of laymen chiefly lords. The motion carried is to the effect that the statements on certain points contained in Maurice's last essay are of a dangerous character, and that his connection with the theology of the school ought not to continue. I moved as an amendment that the bishop be requested to appoint competent theologians who should personally examine how far the statements

of Mr. Maurice were conformable to or at variance with the three creeds and the formularies of the church of England, and should make a report upon them, and that the bishop should be requested to communicate with the council. For myself I find in different parts of what Maurice has written things that I cannot, and I am quite certain the council had not been able to, reconcile. This consideration alone seemed to me to show that they were not in a condition to proceed with a definite judgment. I do not feel sufficiently certain what his view as a whole may be, even if I were otherwise competent to judge whether it is within or beyond the latitude allowed by the church in this matter. And independently of all this I thought that even decency demanded of the council, acting perforce in a judicial capacity, that they should let the accused person know in the most distinct terms for *what* he was dismissed, and should show that they had dismissed him, if at all, only after using greater pains to ascertain that his opinions were in real contrariety to some article of the faith. I also cherished the hope, founded on certain parts of what he has said, that his friends might be able in the meantime to arrange some *formula concordiæ* which might avert the scandal and mischief of the dismissal. Sir J. Patteson, Sir B. Brodie, and Mr. Green supported the amendment, but the majority went the other way, and much was I grieved at it. I am not inclined to abate the dogmatic profession of the church — on the contrary, nothing would induce me to surrender the smallest fraction of it; but while jealous of its infraction in any particular, I am not less jealous of the obtrusion of any private or local opinion into the region of dogma; and above all I hold that there should be as much rigour in a trial of this kind, irrespective of the high character and distinguished powers of the person charged in this particular case, as if he were indicted for murder.[1]

Long afterwards, when the alleged heretic was dead, Mr. Gladstone wrote of him to Mr. Macmillan (April 11, 1884): 'Maurice is indeed a spiritual splendour, to borrow the phrase of Dante about St. Dominic. His intellectual constitution had long been, and still is, to me a good deal

[1] See *Life of Maurice*, ii. p. 195; *Life of Wilberforce*, ii. pp. 208–218. See also Mr. Gladstone's letter to Bishop Hampden, 1856, above p. 168.

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of an enigma. When I remember what is said and thought of him, and by whom, I feel that this must be greatly my own fault.' Some years after the affair at King's College, Maurice was appointed to Vere Street, and the attack upon him was renewed. Mr. Gladstone was one of those who signed an address of recognition and congratulation.

## CHAPTER II

### THE TRIUMPH OF 1853

*(1853)*

> We have not sought to evade the difficulties of our position. . . . We have not attempted to counteract them by narrow or flimsy expedients. . . . We have proposed plans which will go some way towards closing up many vexed financial questions. . . . While we have sought to do justice to intelligence and skill as compared with property — while we have sought to do justice to the great labouring community by further extending their relief from indirect taxation, we have not been guided by any desire to set one class against another. — GLADSTONE (1853).



MR. GLADSTONE began this year, so important both to himself and to the country, with what he described as a short but active and pleasant visit to Oxford. He stayed at Christ Church with Dr. Jacobson, of whom it was observed that he always looked as if on the point of saying something extremely piercing and shrewd, only it never came. He paid many calls, dined at Oriel, had a luncheon and made a speech in the hall at Balliol; passed busy days and brisk evenings, and filled up whatever spare moments he could find or manufacture, with treasury papers, books on taxation, consolidated annuities, and public accounts, alternating with dips into Lamennais — the bold and passionate French mystic, fallen angel of his church, most moving of all the spiritual tragedies of that day of heroic idealists.

On February 3 he moved into the house of the chancellor of the exchequer in that best known of all streets which is not a street, where he was destined to pass some two and twenty of the forty-one years of the public life that lay before him. He had a correspondence with Mr. Disraeli, his predecessor, on the valuation of the furniture in

the official house. There was question, also, of the robe that passes down under some law of exchange from one chancellor to another on an apparently unsettled footing. The tone on this high concern was not wholly amicable. Mr. Gladstone notes especially in his diary that he wrote a draft of one of his letters on a Sunday, as being, I suppose, the day most favourable to self-control; while Mr. Disraeli at last suggests that Mr. Gladstone should really consult Sir Charles Wood, 'who is at least a man of the world.' Such are the angers of celestial minds.

At an early cabinet (Feb. 5) he began the battle that lasted in various shapes all the rest of his life. It was on a question of reducing the force in the Pacific. 'Lord Aberdeen, Granville, Molesworth, and I were for it. We failed.' What was the case for this particular retrenchment I do not know, nor does it matter. Fiercer engagements, and many of them, were to follow. Meanwhile he bent all the energies of his mind to the other front of financial questions — to raising money rather than expending it, and with unwearied industry applied himself to solve the problem of redistributing the burdens and improving the machinery of taxation.

For many years circumstances had given to finance a lively and commanding place in popular interest. The protracted discussion on the corn law, conducted not only in senate and cabinet, but in country market-places and thronged exchanges, in the farmer's ordinary and at huge gatherings in all the large towns in the kingdom, had agitated every class in the community. The battle between free trade and protection, ending in a revolution of our commercial system, had awakened men to the enormous truth, as to which they are always so soon ready to relapse into slumber, that budgets are not merely affairs of arithmetic, but in a thousand ways go to the root of the prosperity of individuals, the relations of classes, and the strength of kingdoms. The finance of the whigs in the years after the Reform bill had not only bewildered parliament, but had filled merchants, bankers, shipowners, manufacturers, shopkeepers, and the whole array of general taxpayers with

perplexity and dismay. Peel recovered a financial equilibrium and restored public confidence, but Peel was gone. The whigs who followed him after 1846 had once more laboured under an unlucky star in this vital sphere of national affairs. They performed the unexampled feat of bringing forward four budgets in a single year, the first of them introduced by Lord John Russell himself as prime minister. By 1851 floundering had reached a climax. Finance had thus discredited one historical party; it had broken up the other. It was finance that overthrew weak governments and hindered the possibility of a strong one.

Mr. Disraeli, the most unsparing of all the assailants of Peel, tried his own hand in 1852. To have the genius and the patience of a great partisan chief is one gift, and this he had; to grasp the complex material interests of a vast diversified society like the United Kingdom demands powers of a different order. The defeat of Mr. Disraeli's budget at the end of 1852 seemed to complete the circle of fiscal confusion. Every source of public income was the object of assault. Every indirect tax was to be reduced or swept away, and yet no two men appeared to agree upon the principles of the direct taxes that were to take their place. The window duty, the paper duty, the tax on advertisements, the malt-tax, the stamp on marine insurances, were all to vanish, but even the most zealous reformers were powerless to fill the void. The order-book of the House of Commons was loaded with motions about the income-tax, and an important committee sat in 1851 to consider all the questions connected with the possibility of its readjustment and amendment. They could not even frame a report. The belief that it was essentially unjust to impose the tax at one and the same rate upon permanent and temporary incomes, prevailed in the great mass, especially of the liberal party. Discussions arose all through this period, descending not only to the elementary principles of taxation, but, as Mr. Gladstone said, almost to the first principles of civilised society itself. Party distraction, ministerial embarrassment, adjournment after adjournment of a decision upon fundamental maxims of national taxation — such was

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the bewildered scene. At last a statesman appeared, a financier almost by accident (for, as we have seen, it was by no special choice of his own that Mr. Gladstone went to the exchequer), but a financier endowed with a practical imagination of the highest class, with a combination of the spirit of vigorous analysis and the spirit of vigorous system, with the habit of unflagging toil, and above all, with the gift of indomitable courage. If anybody suggested the re-appointment of Hume's committee, the idea was wisely dismissed. It was evidently, as Graham said, the duty of the executive government to lead the way and to guide public opinion in a matter of this crucial importance. It seemed impossible and unworthy to avoid a frank declaration about the income-tax. He was strongly of opinion (March 15) that a larger measure would be carried with greater certainty and ease than simple renewal; and that a combination of income-tax, gradually diminishing to a fixed term of extinction, with reduction of the interest of debt, and a review of the probate and legacy duties, afforded the best ground for a financial arrangement both successful and creditable. It was strong ideas of this kind that encouraged Mr. Gladstone to build on a broad foundation.

The nature of his proceedings he set out in one of the most interesting of his political memoranda: —

> The liberals were, to all appearance, pledged to the reconstruction of the tax by their opinions, and the tories by their party following. The small fraction of Peelites could probably be relied upon the other way, and some few individuals with financial knowledge and experience. The mission of the new government was described by Lord Aberdeen in the House of Lords as a financial mission, and the stress of it thus lay upon a person very ill-prepared. My opinions were with Peel; but under such circumstances it was my duty to make a close and searching investigation into the whole nature of the tax, and make up my mind whether there was any means of accepting or compounding with the existing state of opinion. I went to work, and laboured very hard. When I had entered gravely upon my financial studies, I one day had occasion — I know not what — to go into the

city and to call upon Mr. Samuel Gurney, to whom experience and character had given a high position there. He asked me with interest about my preparations for my budget; and he said, 'One thing I will venture to urge, whatever your plan is, — let it be simple.' I was a man much disposed to defer to authority, and I attached weight to this advice. But as I went further and further into my subject, I became more and more convinced that, as an honest steward, I had no option but to propose the renewal of the tax in its uniform shape. I constructed much elaborate argument in support of my proposition, which I knew it would be difficult to answer. But I also knew that no amount of unassisted argument would suffice to overcome the obstacles in my way, and that this could only be done by large compensations in my accompanying propositions. So I was led legitimately on, and on, until I had framed the most complicated scheme ever submitted to parliament.

Truly has it been said that there is something repulsive to human nature in the simple reproduction of defunct budgets. Certainly if anything can be more odious than a living tax, it is a dead one. It is as much as is consonant to biography to give an outline of the plan that was gradually wrought out in Mr. Gladstone's mind during the first three laborious months of 1853, and to mark the extraordinarily far-reaching and comprehensive character of the earliest of his thirteen budgets. Its initial boldness lay in the adoption of the unusual course of estimating the national income roughly for a long period of seven years, and assuming that expenditure would remain tolerably steady for the whole of that period. Just as no provident man in private life settles his establishment on the basis of one year or two years only, so Mr. Gladstone abandoned hand-to-mouth, and took long views. 'I ought, no doubt,' he said afterwards, 'to have pointed out explicitly that a great disturbance and increase of our expenditure would baffle my reckonings.' Meanwhile, the fabric was planned on strong foundations and admirable lines. The simplification of the tariff of duties of customs, begun by Peel eleven years before, was carried forward almost to completion. Nearly one hundred and forty duties

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were extinguished, and nearly one hundred and fifty were lowered. The tea duty was to be reduced in stages extending over three years from over two shillings to one shilling. In the department of excise, the high and injurious duty on soap, which brought into the exchequer over eleven hundred thousand pounds annually, was swept entirely away. In the same department, by raising the duties on spirits manufactured in Ireland nearer to the level of England and Scotland, a step was taken towards identity of taxation in the three kingdoms — by no means an unequivocal good. Miscellaneous provisions and minor aspects of the scheme need not detain us; but a great reform of rate and scale in the system of the assessed taxes, the reduction of the duty on the beneficent practice of life insurance from half-a-crown to sixpence on the hundred pounds, and the substitution of a uniform receipt stamp, were no contemptible contributions to the comfort and well-being of the community. Advertisements in newspapers became free of duty.[1]

The keystone of the budget in Mr. Gladstone's conception was the position to be assigned in it to the income-tax. This he determined to renew for a period of seven years, — for two years at sevenpence in the pound, for two years more at sixpence, and for the last three at fivepence. By that time he hoped that parliament would be able to dispense with it. Meanwhile it was to be extended to Ireland, in compensation for the remission of a debt owed by Ireland to the British treasury of between four and five millions. It was to be extended, also, at a reduced rate of fivepence, to incomes between a hundred and fifty and a hundred pounds — the former having hitherto been the line of total exemption. From the retention of the income-tax as a portion of the permanent and ordinary finance of the country the chancellor of the exchequer was wholly and strongly averse, and so he remained for more than twenty years to come. In order,

[1] A curious parliamentary incident occurred. The original proposal was to reduce the duty from eighteenpence to sixpence. A motion to repeal it altogether was rejected by ten. Then a motion was made to substitute zero for sixpence in the clause. The Speaker ruled that this reversal of the previous vote was not out of order, and it was carried by nine.

however, to meet a common and a just objection, that under this impost intelligence, enterprise, and skill paid too much and property paid too little, he resolved upon a bold step. He proposed that the legacy duty, hitherto confined to personal property passing on death, either by will or by inheritance and not by settlement, should henceforth be extended to real property, and to both descriptions of property passing by settlement, whether real or personal. In a word, the legacy duty was to extend to all successions whatever. This was the proposal that in many senses cut deepest. It was the first rudimentary breach in the ramparts of the territorial system, unless, indeed, we count as first the abolition of the corn law.[1] Mr. Gladstone eagerly disclaimed any intention of accelerating by the pressure of fiscal enactment changes in the tenure of landed property, and the letters which the reader has already seen (pp. 345–9) show the high social value that he invariably set upon the maintenance of the old landed order. The succession duty, as we shall find, for the time disappointed his expectations, for he counted on two millions, and in fact it yielded little more than half of one. But it secured for its author the lasting resentment of a powerful class.

Such was the scheme that Mr. Gladstone now worked out in many weeks of toil that would have been slavish, were it not that toil is never slavish when illuminated by a strenuous purpose. When by and by the result had made him the hero of a glorious hour, he wrote to Lord Aberdeen (April 19): 'I had the deepest anxiety with regard to you, as our chief, lest by faults of my own I should aggravate the cares and difficulties into which I had at least helped to bring you; and the novelty of our political relations with many of our colleagues, together with the fact that I had been myself slow, and even reluctant, to the formation of a new connection, filled me with an almost feverish desire to do no injustice to that connection now that it was formed; and to redeem the pledge you generously gave on my behalf, that there would be no want of cordiality and zeal in the discharge

[1] Some may place first the Act of 1833 making real estate liable for simple contract debts.

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of any duties which it might fall to me to perform on behalf of such a government as was then in your contemplation.'

Thirteen, fourteen, fifteen hours a day he toiled at his desk. Treasury officials and trade experts, soap deputations and post-horse deputations, representatives of tobacco and representatives of the West India interest, flocked to Downing Street day by day all through March. If he went into the city to dine with the Lord Mayor, the lamentable hole thus made in his evening was repaired by working till four in the morning upon customs reform, Australian mints, budget plans of all kinds. It is characteristic that even this mountain load of concentrated and exacting labour did not prevent him from giving a Latin lesson every day to his second boy.

II

'Some days before the day appointed for my statement,' says Mr. Gladstone, 'I recited the leading particulars to my able and intelligent friend Cardwell, not in the cabinet but then holding office as president of the board of trade. He was so bewildered and astounded at the bigness of the scheme, that I began to ask myself, Have I a right to ask my colleagues to follow me amidst all these rocks and shoals? In consequence I performed a drastic operation upon the plan, and next day I carried to Lord Aberdeen a reduced and mutilated scheme which might be deemed by some politicians to be weaker but safer. I put to Lord Aberdeen the question I had put to myself, and stated my readiness, if he should think it called for, to make this sacrifice to the probable inclinations of my colleagues. But he boldly and wisely said, "I take it upon myself to ask you to bring your original and whole plan before the cabinet." I thought this an ample warrant.'

At last, after Mr. Gladstone had spent an hour at the palace in explaining his scheme to the Prince Consort, the budget was opened to the cabinet (April 9) in a speech of three hours — an achievement, I should suppose, unparalleled in that line, for a cabinet consists of men each with pretty absorbing pre-occupations of his own. The

exposition was 'as ingenious,' Lord Aberdeen told Prince Albert, 'as clear, and for the most part as convincing, as anything I have ever heard.' 'Gladstone,' said Lord Aberdeen later (1856) 'does not weigh well against one another different arguments, each of which has a real foundation. But he is unrivalled in his power of proving that a specious argument has no real foundation. On the Succession bill the whole cabinet was against him. He delivered to us much the same speech as he made in the House of Commons. At its close we were all convinced.'[1]

Differences that might easily become serious speedily arose upon details in the minds of two or three of them, and for some days the prime minister regarded the undertaking as not only difficult but perilous. Sir Charles Wood, in cabinet (April 11), strongly disapproved of the extension of income-tax to Ireland, and to the lowering of the exemption line. On Ireland the plan would lay more than half a million of new taxation, whereas much of the relief, such as soap and assessed taxes, would not touch her.[2] Palmerston thought it a great plan, perfectly just, and admirably put together, only it opened too many points of attack, and it could never be carried: Disraeli was on the watch, the Irish would join him, so would the radicals, while the succession duty, to which Palmerston individually had great objection, would estrange many conservatives. Lord John Russell perceived difficulties, but he did not see an alternative. Graham then fell in, disliked the twofold extension of the income-tax, and thought they should only take away half the soap-tax. Lord Lansdowne (a great Irish landlord) agreed with him. Mr. Gladstone told them that he was willing to propose whatever the cabinet might decide on, except one thing, namely, the breaking up of the basis of the income-tax: that he could not be a party to; he should regard it as a high political offence. With this reservation he should follow their judgment, but he strongly adhered to his whole plan. Lord Aberdeen said, 'You must take care your proposals are not unpopular ones.'

[1] Mrs. Simpson's *Many Memories*, p. 237.

[2] For paper on Irish income-tax, see Appendix.

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Mr. Gladstone replied that it was after applying the test of popularity, that he was convinced the budget would be damaged beforehand by some of the small changes that had been suggested.

At the end of a long and interesting discussion, there stood for the whole budget Lord John, Newcastle, Clarendon, Molesworth, Gladstone, with Argyll and Aberdeen more or less favourable; for dropping the two extensions of income-tax and keeping half the soap duty, Lansdowne, Graham, Wood; more or less leaning towards them, Palmerston and Granville. They agreed to meet again the next day (April 12), when they got into the open sea. Wood stuck to his text. Lansdowne suggested that an increased spirit duty and an income-tax for Ireland together would be something like a breach of faith. Palmerston thought they would be beaten, but he would accept the budget provided they were not to be bound to dissolve or resign upon such a point as to the two extensions of the income-tax. Lord John said that if they were beaten on differentiating the tax, they would have to dissolve. Palmerston expressed his individual opinion in favour of a distinction for precarious incomes, and would act in that sense if he were out of the government; as it was, he assented. Argyll created a diversion by suggesting the abandonment of the Irish spirit duty. Mr. Gladstone admitted that he thought the spirit duty the weakest point of the plan, though warrantable and tenable on the whole. At last, after further patient and searching discussion, the cabinet finding that the suggested amendments cut against one another, were for adopting the entire budget, the dissentients being Lansdowne, Graham, Wood, and Herbert. Graham was full of ill auguries, but said he would assent and assist. Wood looked grave, and murmured that he must take time.

In the course of these preliminaries Lord John Russell had gone to Graham, very uneasy about the income-tax. Graham, though habitually desponding, bade him be of good cheer. Their opponents, he said, were in numbers strong; but the budget would be excellent to dissolve upon, and Lord John admitted that they would gain forty seats.

They agreed, however, in Graham's language, that it would never do to play their trump card until the state of the game actually required it. Lord John confessed that he was no judge of figures, — somewhat of a weakness in a critic of a budget, — and Graham comforted him by the reply that he was at any rate the best judge living of House of Commons tactics.

The position of the government in the House of Commons was notoriously weak. The majority that had brought them into existence was excessively narrow. It had been well known from the first that if any of the accidents of a session should happen to draw the tories, the Irish, and the radicals into one lobby, ministers would find themselves in a minority. Small defeats occurred. The budget was only four days off. Mr. Gladstone enters in his diary: 'Spoke against Gibson; beaten by 200–169. Our third time this week. Very stiff work this. Ellice said dissolution would be the end of it; we agreed in the House to a cabinet to-morrow. Herbert and Cardwell, to whom I spoke, inclined to dissolve.' Next day (April 15), the cabinet met in a flutter, for the same tactics might well be repeated, whenever Mr. Disraeli should think the chances good.

Lord John adverted to the hostility of the radicals as exhibited in the tone of the debate, and hinted the opinion that they must take in a reef or two. Mr. Gladstone doubted whether the budget could live in that House, whatever form it might assume; but even with such perils he should look upon the whole budget as less unsafe than a partial contraction. Graham took the same view of the disposition of parliament: keen opposition; lukewarm support; the necessity of a greater party sympathy and connection to enable them to surmount the difficulties of a most unusual and hazardous operation. But he did not appear to lean to dissolution, and the older members of the cabinet generally declared themselves against it. 'In the end we went back to the position that we must have a budget on Monday, but Clarendon, Herbert, and Palmerston joined the chorus of those who said the measure was too sharp upon Ireland. The idea was then

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started whether we should go the length of the entire remission of the consolidated annuities[1] and impose the income-tax at sevenpence, with the augmented spirit duty. This view found favour generally; and I felt that some excess in the mere sacrifice of money was no great matter compared with the advantage of so great an approximation to equal taxation.' Then, 'speaking with great deference,' Gladstone repeated his belief once more that the entire budget was safer than a contracted one, both for the House and the country, and his conviction that if they proposed it, the name and fame of the government at any rate would stand well. 'Wood seemed still to hang back, but the rest of the cabinet now appeared well satisfied, and we parted, each resolved and certainly more likely to stand or fall by the budget as a whole than we seemed to be on Wednesday.'

III

The decisive cabinet was on Saturday, April 16. It was finally settled that the budget should be proposed as it stood, with its essential features unaltered. On Sunday, the chancellor of the exchequer went as usual twice to church, and read the *Paradiso;* 'but I was obliged,' he says, with an accent of contrition, 'to give several hours to my figures.' Monday brought the critical moment. 'April 18. Wrote minutes. Read Shakespeare at night. This day was devoted to working up my papers and figures for the evening. Then drove and walked with C. [Mrs. Gladstone]. Went at $4\frac{1}{2}$ to the House. Spoke $4\frac{3}{4}$ hours in detailing the financial measures, and my strength stood out well, thank God. Many kind congratulations afterwards. Herberts and Wortleys came home with us and had soup and negus.'

The proceeding that figures here so simply was, in fact, one of the great parliamentary performances of the century. Lord Aberdeen wrote to Prince Albert that 'the display of power was wonderful; it was agreed in all quarters that there had been nothing like the speech for many years, and that under the impression of his commanding eloquence the

[1] Loans made to Ireland for various purposes.

reception of the budget had been most favourable.' Lord John told the Queen the speech was one of the ablest ever made in the House of Commons. 'Mr. Pitt, in the days of his glory, might have been more imposing, but he could not have been more persuasive.' Lord Aberdeen heard from Windsor the next day: 'The Queen must write a line to Lord Aberdeen to say how delighted she is at the great success of Mr. Gladstone's speech last night. . . . We have every reason to be sanguine now, which is a great relief to the Queen.' Prince Albert used the same language to Mr. Gladstone: 'I cannot resist writing you a line in order to congratulate you on the success of your speech of yesterday. I have just completed a close and careful perusal of it and should certainly have cheered had I a seat in the House. I hear from all sides that the budget has been well received. Trusting that your Christian humility will not allow you to be dangerously elated, I cannot help sending for your perusal the report which Lord John Russell sent to the Queen, feeling sure that it will give you pleasure, such approbation being the best reward a public man can have.'

On the cardinal question of the fortunes of the ministry its effect was decisive. The prime minister wrote to Mr. Gladstone himself (April 19): 'While everybody is congratulating *me* on the wonderful impression produced in the House of Commons last night, it seems only reasonable that I should have a word of congratulation for *you*. You will believe how much more sincerely I rejoice on your account than on my own, although most assuredly, if the existence of my government shall be prolonged, it will be your work.' To Madame de Lieven Aberdeen said that Gladstone had given a strength and lustre to the administration which it could not have derived from anything else. No testimony was more agreeable to Mr. Gladstone than a letter from Lady Peel. 'I know the recollections,' he replied, 'with which you must have written, and therefore I will not scruple to say that as I was inspired by the thought of treading, however unequally, in the steps of my great teacher and master in public affairs, so it was

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one of my keenest anxieties not to do dishonour to his memory, or injustice to the patriotic policy with which his name is forever associated.'[1]

Greville makes a true point when he says that the budget speech 'has raised Gladstone to a great political elevation, and what is of far greater consequence than the measure itself, has given the country assurance of a *man* equal to great political necessities and fit to lead parties and direct governments.'[2] Mr. Gladstone had made many speeches that were in a high degree interesting, ingenious, attractive, forcible. He now showed that besides and apart from all this, he was the possessor of qualities without which no amount of rhetorician's glitter commands the House of Commons for a single hour after the fireworks have ceased to blaze. He showed that he had precise perception, positive and constructive purpose, and a powerful will. In 1851, he had on two occasions exhibited the highest competency as a critic of the budget of Sir Charles Wood. On the memorable night in the previous December, when he had torn Mr. Disraeli's budget to pieces, he had proved how terrifying he could be in exposure and assault. He now triumphantly met the test that he had triumphantly applied to his predecessor, and presented a command of even more imposing resources in the task of responsible construction than he had displayed in irresponsible criticism. The speech was saturated with fact; the horizons were large; and the opening of each in the long series of topics, from Mr. Pitt and the great war, down to the unsuspected connection between the repeal of the soap-tax and the extinction of the slave trade in Africa, was exalted and spacious. The arguments throughout were close, persuasive, exhaustive; the moral appeal was in the only tone worthy of a great minister addressing a governing assembly — a masculine invocation of their intellectual and political courage. This is the intrepid way in which a strong parliament and a strong nation like to see public difficulties handled, and they now welcomed the appearance of a

[1] Cavour, as Costi's letters show, took an eager interest in Mr. Gladstone's budget speech.

[2] Greville, Third Series, i. p. 59.

new minister, who rejected what he called narrow and flimsy expedients, of which so much had been seen in the last half dozen years; who was not afraid to make a stand against heedless men with hearts apparently set on drying up one source of revenue after another; who did not shrink from sconcing the powerful landed phalanx like other people; and who at the same time boldly used and manfully defended the most unpopular of all the public imposts. In politics the spectacle of sheer courage is often quite as good in its influence and effect as the best of logic. It was so here. While proposing that the income-tax should come to an end in seven years, he yet produced the most comprehensive analysis and the boldest vindication of the structure of the tax as it stood. His manner was plain, often almost conversational, but his elaborate examination of the principles of an income-tax remains to this day a master example of accurate reasoning thrown into delightful form. He admitted all the objections to it: the inquisition that it entailed, the frauds to which it led, the sense in the public mind of its injustice in laying the same rate upon the holder of idle and secured public funds, upon the industrious trader, upon the precarious earnings of the professional man. It was these disadvantages that made him plan the extinction of the tax at the end of a definite period, when the salutary remissions of other burdens now proposed would have had time to bring forth their fruits. As was said by a later chancellor of the exchequer, this speech not only won 'universal applause from his audience at the time, but changed the convictions of a large part of the nation, and turned, at least for several years, a current of popular opinion which had seemed too powerful for any minister to resist.'[1]

The succession duty brought Mr. Gladstone into the first conflict of his life with the House of Lords. That land should be made to pay like other forms of property was a proposition denounced as essentially impracticable, oppressive, unjust, cowardly, and absurd. It was called *ex post facto* legislation. It was one of the most obnoxious,

[1] Northcote, *Twenty Years of Financial Policy*, p. 185.

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detestable, and odious measures ever proposed. Its author was a vulture soaring over society, waiting for the rich harvest that death would pour into his treasury. Lord Derby invoked him as a phœnix chancellor, in whom Mr. Pitt rose from his ashes with double lustre, for Mr. Gladstone had ventured where Pitt had failed. He admitted that nothing short of the chancellor's extraordinary skill and dexterity could have carried proposals so evil through the House of Commons.[1] Meanwhile the public counted up their gains: a remission on tea, good for twenty shillings a year in an ordinary household; a fall in the washing bill; a boon of a couple of pounds for the man who insured his life for five hundred; an easy saving of ten pounds a year in the assessed taxes, and so forth, — the whole performance ending with 'a dissolving view of the decline and fall' of the hated income-tax.

The financial proceedings of this year included a proposal for the redemption of South Sea stock and an attempted operation on the national debt, by the creation of new stocks bearing a lower rate of interest, two options of conversion being given to the holders of old stock. The idea of the creation of a two-and-half-per-cent. stock, said Mr. Gladstone in later years, though in those days novel, was very favourably received.[2]

I produced my plan. Disraeli offered it a malignant opposition. He made a demand for time; the one demand that ought not to have been made. In proposals of this kind, it is allowed to be altogether improper. In 1844 Mr. Goulburn was permitted, I think, to carry through with great expedition his plan for a large reduction of interest. When Mr. Goschen produced his still larger and much more important measure, we, the

[1] Mr. Gladstone received valuable aid from Bethell, the solicitor-general. On leaving office in 1855 he wrote to Bethell: 'After having had to try your patience more than once in circumstances of real difficulty, I have found your kindness inexhaustible, and your aid invaluable, so that I really can ill tell on which of the two I look back with the greater pleasure. The memory of the Succession Duty bill is to me something like what Inkermann may be to a private of the Guards: you were the sergeant from whom I got my drill and whose hand and voice carried me through.'

[2] The city articles of the time justify this statement.

opposition, did our best to expedite the decision. There are no complications requiring time on such an occasion. It is a matter of aye or no. But when time is allowed the chapter of accidents allows an opponent to hope that a situation known to be unusually happy will deteriorate. Of this contingency Disraeli took his chance. Time as it happened was in his favour. It was no question of the substance of the plan, but a moderate change in the political barometer, which reduced to two or three millions a subscription which at the right moment would probably have been twenty or thirty.[1]

In a letter to W. R. Farquhar (March 8, 1861) he makes further remarks, which are introspective and autobiographic: —

Looking back now upon those of my proceedings in 1853 which related to interest upon exchequer bills and to the reduction of interest on the public debt, I think that there was nothing in the proposals themselves which might not have taken full and quick effect, if they had been made at a time which I may best describe as the time that precedes high-water with respect to abundance of money and security of the market. As respects exchequer bills, I am decidedly of opinion that the rates of premium current for some years before '53 were wholly incompatible with a sound state of things: and the fluctuations then were even greater than since. Still I think that I committed an error from want of sufficient quickness in discerning the signs of the times, for we were upon the very eve of an altered state of things, and any alteration of a kind at all serious was enough to make the period unfit for those grave operations. It is far from being the first or only time when I have had reason to lament my own deficiency in the faculty of rapid and comprehensive observation. I failed to see that high-water was just past; and that although the tide had not perceptibly fallen, yet it was going to fall. The truth likewise is this (to go a step further in my confessions) that almost all my experience in money affairs had been of a most difficult and trying kind, under circumstances which admitted of no choice

[1] Gladstone Memo., 1897. See also Appendix.

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but obliged me to sail always very near the wind, and this induced a habit of more daring navigation than I could now altogether approve. Nor will I excuse myself by saying that others were deceived like me, for none of them were in a condition to have precisely my responsibility.

Another note contributes a further point of explanation: 'I have always imagined that this fault was due to my experience in the affairs of the Hawarden and Oak Farm estates, where it was an incessant course of sailing near the wind, and there was really no other hope.'

Seven years later Mr. Gladstone, once more chancellor of the exchequer, again produced a budget. Semi-ironic cheers met his semi-ironic expression of an expectation that he would be asked the question: what had become of the calculations of 1853? The succession duty proved a woeful disappointment, and instead of producing two million pounds, produced only six hundred thousand. A similar but greater disappointment, we must recollect, owing mainly to a singular miscalculation as to the income-tax, had marked Peel's memorable budget of 1842, which landed him in a deficiency of nearly two and a quarter millions, instead of a surplus of half a million.[1] Of the disappointment in his own case, Mr. Gladstone when the time came propounded an explanation, only moderately conclusive. I need not discuss it, for as everybody knows, the effective reason why the income-tax could not be removed was the heavy charge created by the Crimean war. What is more to the point in estimating the finance of 1853, is its effect in enabling us to meet the strain of the war. It was this finance that, continuing the work begun by Peel, made the country in 1859 richer by more than sixteen per cent. than it had been in 1853. It was this finance, that by clinching the open questions that enveloped the income-tax, and setting it upon a defensible foundation while it lasted, bore us through the struggle. Unluckily, in demonstrating the perils of med-

[1] It may be said, however, that Peel was right about the yield of the income-tax, and only overlooked the fact that it would not all be collected within the year.

dling with the structure of the tax, in showing its power and simplicity, the chancellor was at the same time providing the easiest means, if not also the most direct incentive, to that policy of expenditure — it rose from fifty to seventy millions between 1853 and 1859 — which was one of the most fatal obstacles to the foremost aims of his political life. It was twenty years from now, as my readers will see, before the effort, now foreshadowed, to exclude the income-tax from the ordinary sources of national revenue, reached its dramatic close.

# CHAPTER III

## THE CRIMEAN WAR

(*1853–1854*)

> He [Burke] maintained that the attempt to bring the Turkish empire into the consideration of the balance of power in Europe was extremely new, and contrary to all former political systems. He pointed out in strong terms the danger and impolity of our espousing the Ottoman cause. — Burke (1791).

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After the session Mr. Gladstone had gone on a visit to Dunrobin, and there he was laid up with illness for many days. It was the end of September before he was able to travel south. At Dingwall they presented him (Sept. 27) with the freedom of that ancient burgh. He spoke of himself as having completed the twenty-first year of his political life, and as being almost the youngest of those veteran statesmen who occupied the chief places in the counsels of the Queen. At Inverness the same evening, he told them that in commercial legislation he had reaped where others had sown; that he had enjoyed the privilege of taking a humble but laborious part in realising those principles of free trade which, in the near future, would bring, in the train of increased intercourse and augmented wealth, that closer social and moral union of the nations of the earth which men all so fervently desire, and which must in the fulness of time lessen the frequency of strife and war. Yet even while the hopeful words were falling from the speaker's lips, he might have heard, not in far distance but close at hand, the trumpets and drums, the heavy rumbling of the cannon, and all the clangour of a world in arms.

II

One of the central and perennial interests of Mr. Gladstone's life was that shifting, intractable, and interwoven

tangle of conflicting interests, rival peoples, and antagonistic faiths, that is veiled under the easy name of the Eastern question. The root of the Eastern question, as everybody almost too well knows, is the presence of the Ottoman Turks in Europe, their possession of Constantinople,—that incomparable centre of imperial power standing in Europe but facing Asia,—and their sovereignty as Mahometan masters over Christian races. In one of the few picturesque passages of his eloquence Mr. Gladstone once described the position of these races. 'They were like a shelving beach that restrained the ocean. That beach, it is true, is beaten by the waves; it is laid desolate; it produces nothing; it becomes perhaps nothing save a mass of shingle, of rock, of almost useless sea-weed. But it is a fence behind which the cultivated earth can spread, and escape the incoming tide, and such was the resistance of Bulgarians, of Servians, and of Greeks. It was that resistance which left Europe to claim the enjoyment of her own religion and to develop her institutions and her laws.' This secular strife between Ottoman and Christian gradually became a struggle among Christian powers of northern and western Europe, to turn tormenting questions in the east to the advantage of rival ambitions of their own. At a certain epoch in the eighteenth century Russia first seized her place among the Powers. By the end of the century she had pushed her force into the west by the dismemberment of Poland; she had made her way to the southern shores of the Black Sea; and while still the most barbaric of all the states, she had made good a vague claim to exercise the guardianship of civilisation on behalf of the Christian races and the Orthodox church. This claim it was that led at varying intervals of time, and with many diversities of place, plea, and colour, to crisis after crisis springing up within the Turkish empire, but henceforth all of them apt to spread with dangerous contagion to governments beyond Ottoman limits.

England, unlike France, had no systematic tradition upon this complicated struggle. When war began between Russia and the Porte in 1771, we supported Russia and helped her to obtain an establishment in the Black Sea. Towards the

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end of 1782 when Catherine by a sort of royal syllogism, as Fox called it, took the Crimea into her own hands, the whig cabinet of the hour did not think it necessary to lend Turkey their support, though France and Spain proposed a combination to resist. Then came Pitt. The statesman whose qualities of greatness so profoundly impressed his contemporaries has usually been praised as a minister devoted to peace, and only driven by the French Revolution into the long war. His preparations in 1791 for a war with Russia on behalf of the Turk are a serious deduction from this estimate. Happily the alarms of the Baltic trade, and the vigorous reasoning of Fox, produced such an effect upon opinion, that Pitt was driven, on peril of the overthrow of his government, to find the best expedient he could to bring the business to an end without extremities. In 1853 the country was less fortunate than it had been in 1791.

A Russian diplomatist made a homely comparison of the Eastern question to the gout; now its attack is in the foot, now in the hand; but all is safe if only it does not fly to a vital part. In 1852 the Eastern question showed signs of flying to the heart, and a catastrophe was sure. A dispute between Greek and Latin religious as to the custody of the holy places at Jerusalem, followed by the diplomatic rivalries of their respective patrons, Russia and France, produced a crisis that was at first of no extraordinary pattern. The quarrel between two packs of monks about a key and a silver star was a trivial symbol of the vast rivalry of centuries between powerful churches, between great states, between heterogeneous races. The dispute about the holy places was adjusted, but was immediately followed by a claim from the Czar for recognition by treaty of his rights as protector of the Sultan's Christian subjects. This claim the Sultan, with encouragement from the British ambassador, rejected, and the Czar marched troops into the Danubian provinces, to hold them in pledge until the required concession should be made to his high protective claims. This issue was no good cause for a general conflagration. Unfortunately many combustibles happened to lie about the world at that time, and craft, misunderstanding, dupery, auto-

cratic pride, democratic hurry, combined to spread the blaze.

The story is still fresh. With the detailed history of the diplomacy that preceded the outbreak of war between England, France, and Turkey on the one part and Russia on the other, we have here happily only the smallest concern. The large question, as it presented itself to Mr. Gladstone's mind in later years, and as it presents itself now to the historic student, had hardly then emerged to the view of the statesmen of the western Powers. Would the success of Russian designs at that day mean anything better than the transfer of the miserable Christian races to the yoke of a new master?[1] Or was the repulse of these designs necessary to secure to the Christian races—who, by the by, were not particularly good friends to one another—the power of governing themselves without any master, either Russian or Turk? To this question, so decisive as it is in judging the policy of the Crimean war, it is not quite easy even now for the historian—who has many other things to think of than has the contemporary politician—to give a confident answer.

Nicholas was not without advisers who warned him that the break-up of Turkey by force of Russian arms might be to the deliverer a loss and not a gain. Brunnow, then Russian ambassador at St. James's, said to his sovereign: 'The war in its results would cause to spring out of the ruins of Turkey all kinds of new states, as ungrateful to us as Greece has been, as troublesome as the Danubian Principalities have been, and an order of things where our influence will be more sharply combated, resisted, restrained, by the rivalries of France, England, Austria, than it has ever been under the Ottoman. War cannot turn to our direct advantage. We shall shed our blood and spend our treasure in order that King Otho may gain Thessaly; that the English may take more islands at their own convenience; that the French too may get their share; and that the

[1] In 1772 Burke had said that he did not wish well to Turkey, for any people but the Turks, situated as they are, would have been cultivated in three hundred years; yet they grow more gross in the very native soil of civility and refinement. But he did not expect to live to see the Turkish barbarian civilised by the Russian. — *Corr.* i. p. 402.

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Ottoman empire may be transformed into independent states, which for us will only become either burdensome clients or hostile neighbours.' If this forecast was right, then to resist Russia was at once to prevent her from embarrassing and weakening herself, and to lock up the Christians in their cruel prison-house for a quarter of a century longer. If sagacious calculation in such a vein as this were the mainspring of the world, history would be stripped of many a crimson page. But far-sighted calculation can no longer be ascribed to the actors in this tragedy of errors—to Nicholas or Napoleon, to Aberdeen or Palmerston, or to any other of them excepting Cavour and the Turk.

In England both people and ministers have been wont to change their minds upon the Eastern question. In the war between Russia and Turkey in 1828, during the last stage of the struggle for Greek independence, Russia as Greek champion against the Turk had the English populace on her side; Palmerston was warmly with her, regarding even her advance to Constantinople with indifference; and Aberdeen was reproached as a Turkish sympathiser. Now we shall see the parts inverted,—England and Palmerston ardent Turks, and Aberdeen falling into disgrace (unjustly enough) as Russian. Before we have done with Mr. Gladstone, the popular wheel will be found to make another and yet another revolution.

III

When Kinglake's first two volumes of his history of the Crimean war appeared (1863), Mr. Gladstone wrote to a friend (May 14): 'Kinglake is fit to be a brilliant popular author, but quite unfit to be a historian. His book is too bad to live, and too good to die. As to the matter most directly within my cognisance, he is not only not too true, but so entirely void of resemblance to the truth, that one asks what was really the original of his picture.'[1] A little

[1] To Mrs. Gladstone, Jan. 3, 1863: 'In the evenings I have leisure. Much of it I have been spending in reading Kinglake's book, which touches very nearly, and not agreeably or justly, the character of Lord Aberdeen and his government. I am afraid Newcastle blabbed on what

earlier he had written to Sir John Acton: 'I was not the important person in the negotiation before the war that Mr. Kinglake seems to suppose; and with him every supposition becomes an axiom and a dogma.' All the papers from various sources to which I have had access show that Mr. Gladstone, as he has just said, had no special share in the various resolutions taken in the decisive period that ended with the abandonment of the Vienna note in the early autumn of 1853. He has himself told us that through the whole of this critical stage Lord Clarendon, then in charge of foreign affairs, was the centre of a distinct set of communications, first, with the prime minister, next, with Lord John Russell as leader in the Commons, and third, with Lord Palmerston, whose long and active career at the foreign office had given him special weight in that department. The cabinet as a body was a machine incapable of being worked by anything like daily and sometimes hourly consultations of this kind, 'the upshot of which would only become known on the more important occasions to the ministers at large, especially to those among them charged with the most laborious departments.'[1] This was not at all said by way of exculpating Mr. Gladstone from his full share of responsibility for the war, for of that he never at any time showed the least wish or intention to clear himself, but rather the contrary. As matter of fact, it was the four statesmen just named who were in effective control of proceedings until the breakdown of the Vienna note, and the despatch of the British and French squadrons through the Dardanelles in October, opened the second stage of the diplomatic campaign, and led directly if not rapidly to its fatal climax.

We have little more than a few glimpses of Mr. Gladstone's participation in the counsels of the eventful months that preceded the outbreak of the war. To Mrs. Gladstone he writes (October 4): 'I can hardly at this moment write about anything else than the Turkish declaration of war. This is a most serious event, and at once raises the question,

took place, and that his blabbing was much coloured with egotism. Clarendon, I hear, is very angry with the book, and Lewis too, but Lewis is not a party concerned.'

[1] *Eng. Hist. Rev.* No. VI. p. 289.

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Are we to go into it? The cabinet meets on Friday, and you must not be surprised at anything that may happen. The weather may be smooth; it also may be *very rough*.' First the smooth weather came. 'October 7. We have had our cabinet, three hours and a half; all there but Graham and Molesworth,[1] who would both have been strongly for peace. We shall have another to-morrow, to look over our results in writing. Some startling things were said and proposed, but I think that as far as government is concerned, all will probably keep straight at this juncture, and as to war I hope we shall not be involved in it, even if it goes on between Russia and Turkey, which is not quite certain.' Aberdeen himself thought the aspect of this cabinet of the 7th on the whole very good, Gladstone arguing strongly against a proposal of Palmerston's that England should enter into an engagement with Turkey to furnish her with naval assistance. Most of the cabinet were for peace. Lord John was warlike, but subdued in tone. Palmerston urged his views 'perseveringly but not disagreeably.' The final instruction was a compromise, bringing the fleet to Constantinople, but limiting its employment to operations of a strictly defensive character. This was one of those peculiar compromises that in their sequel contain surrender. The step soon showed how critical it was. Well indeed might Lord Aberdeen tell the Queen that it would obviously every day become more and more difficult to draw the line between defensive and offensive, between an auxiliary and a principal. So much simpler is a distinction in words than in things. Still, he was able to assure her that, though grounds of difference existed, the discussions of the cabinet of the 8th were carried on amicably and in good humour. With straightforward common sense the Queen pressed the prime minister for his own deliberate counsel on the spirit and ultimate tendency of the policy that he would recommend her to approve. In fact, Lord Aberdeen had no deliberate counsel to proffer. Speedily the weather roughened.

[1] 'Molesworth in the cabinet,' said Lord Aberdeen later, 'was a failure. Until the war he was a mere cipher. When the war had broken out and was popular he became outrageously warlike.' — Mrs. Simpson's *Many Memories*, p. 264; see also Cobden's *Speeches*, ii. p. 28.

Four days later (October 12) the minister repeated that, while elements of wide difference existed, still the appearance of that day was more favourable and tended to mutual agreement. At this cabinet Mr. Gladstone was not present, having gone on an expedition to Manchester, the first of the many triumphal visits of his life to the great industrial centres of the nation. 'Nothing,' he wrote to Lord Aberdeen, 'could have gone off better. Yesterday (October 11), I had to make a visit to the Exchange, which was crammed and most cordial. This morning we had first the "inauguration" of the Peel statue, in the presence of an enormous audience — misnamed so, inasmuch as but a portion of them could hear; and then a meeting in the Town Hall, where there were addresses and speeches made, to which I had to reply. I found the feeling of the assemblage so friendly that I said more on the war question than I had intended, but I sincerely hope I did not transgress the limits you would think it wise for me to observe. The existence of a peace and a war party was evident, from alternate manifestations, but I think the former feeling was decidedly the stronger, and at any rate I should say without the smallest doubt that the feeling of the whole meeting as a mass was unequivocally favourable to the course that the government have pursued.'

'Your Manchester speech,' Lord Aberdeen wrote to him in reply, 'has produced a great and, I hope, a very beneficial effect upon the public mind, and it has much promoted the cause of peace.' This result was extremely doubtful. The language of the Manchester speech is cloudy, but what it comes to is this. It recognises the duty of maintaining the integrity and independence of the Ottoman empire. Independence, however, in this case, says Mr. Gladstone, designates a sovereignty full of anomaly, of misery, of difficulty, and it has been subject every few years since we were born to European discussion and interference; we cannot forget the political solecism of Mahometans exercising despotic rule over twelve millions of our fellow Christians; into the questions growing out of this political solecism we are not now entering; what we see to-day is something different;

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it is the necessity for regulating the distribution of power in Europe; the absorption of power by one of the great potentates of Europe, which would follow the fall of the Ottoman rule, would be dangerous to the peace of the world, and it is the duty of England, at whatever cost, to set itself against such a result.

This was Mr. Gladstone's first public entry upon one of the most passionate of all the objects of his concern for forty years to come. He hears the desolate cry, then but faint, for the succour of the oppressed Christians. He looks to European interference to terminate the hateful solecism. He resists the interference single-handed of the northern invader. It was intolerable that Russia should be allowed to work her will upon Turkey as an outlawed state.[1] In other words, the partition of Turkey was not to follow the partition of Poland. What we shortly call the Crimean war was to Mr. Gladstone the vindication of the public law of Europe against a wanton disturber. This was a characteristic example of his insistent search for a broad sentiment and a comprehensive moral principle. The principle in its present application had not really much life in it; the formula was narrow, as other invasions of public law within the next dozen years were to show. But the clear-cut issues of history only disclose themselves in the long result of Time. It was the diplomatic labyrinth of the passing hour through which the statesmen of the coalition had to thread their way. The disastrous end was what Mr. Disraeli christened the coalition war.

'The first year of the coalition government,' Lord Aberdeen wrote to Mr. Gladstone, 'was eminently prosperous, and this was chiefly owing to your own personal exertions, and to the boldness, ability, and success of your financial measures. Our second year, if not specially brilliant, might still have proved greatly advantageous to the country, had we possessed the courage to resist popular clamour and to avoid war; but this calamity aggravated all other causes of disunion and led to our dissolution.'[2]

[1] *Eng. Hist. Rev.* No. VI. p. 290.

[2] March 17, 1856.

## IV

CHAP. III. Æt. 44.

On November 4, Clarendon wrote to Lord Aberdeen that they were now in an anomalous and painful position, and he had arrived at the conviction that it might have been avoided by firm language and a more decided course five months ago. 'Russia would then, as she is now, have been ready to come to terms, and we should have exercised a control over the Turks that is now not to be obtained.' Nobody, I suppose, doubts to-day that if firmer language had been used in June to Sultan and Czar alike, the catastrophe of war would probably have been avoided, as Lord Clarendon here remorsefully reflects. However that may have been, this pregnant and ominous avowal disclosed the truth that the British cabinet were no longer their own masters; that they had in a great degree, even at this early time, lost all that freedom of action which they constantly proclaimed it the rule of their policy to maintain, and which for a few months longer some of them at least strove very hard but all in vain to recover.

The Turks were driving at war whilst we were labouring for peace, and both by diplomatic action and by sending the fleet to protect Turkish territory against Russian attack, we had become auxiliaries and turned the weaker of the two contending powers into the stronger. A few months afterwards Mr. Gladstone found a classic parallel for the Turkish alliance. 'When Aeneas escaped from the flames of Troy he had an ally. That ally was his father Anchises, and the part which Aeneas performed in the alliance was to carry his ally upon his back.' But the discovery came too late, nor was the Turk the only ally. Against the remonstrances of our ambassador the Sultan declared war upon Russia, and proceeded to acts of war, well knowing that England and France in what they believed to be interests of their own would see him through it. If the Sultan and his ulemas and his pashas were one intractable factor, the French Emperor was another. 'We have just as much to apprehend,' Graham wrote (Oct. 27), 'from the active intervention of our ally as from the open hostility of our

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enemy.' Behind the decorous curtain of European concert Napoleon III. was busily weaving scheme after scheme of his own to fix his unsteady diadem upon his brow, to plant his dynasty among the great thrones of western Europe, and to pay off some old scores of personal indignity put upon him by the Czar.

The Czar fell into all the mistakes that a man could. Emperor by divine right, he had done his best to sting the self-esteem of the revolutionary emperor in Paris. By his language to the British ambassador about dividing the inheritance of the sick man, he had quickened the suspicions of the English cabinet. It is true the sick man will die, said Lord John Russell, but it may not be for twenty, fifty, or a hundred years to come; when William III. and Louis XIV. signed their treaty for the partition of the Spanish monarchy, they first made sure that the death of the king was close at hand. Then the choice as agent at Constantinople of the arrogant and unskilful Menschikoff proved a dire misfortune. Finally, the Czar was fatally misled by his own ambassador in London. Brunnow reported that all the English liberals and economists were convinced that the notion of Turkish reform was absurd; that Aberdeen had told him in accents of contempt and anger, 'I hate the Turks'; and that English views generally as to Russian aggression and Turkish interests had been sensibly modified. All this was not untrue, but it was not true enough to bear the inference that was drawn from it at St. Petersburg. The deception was disastrous, and Brunnow was never forgiven for it.[1]

Another obstacle to a pacific solution, perhaps most formidable of them all, was Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, the British ambassador at Constantinople. Animated by a vehement antipathy to Russia, possessing almost sovereign ascendency at the Porte, believing that the Turk might never meet a happier chance of having the battle out with his adversary once for all, and justly confident that a policy of war would find hearty backers in the London cabinet — in him the

[1] See Martens' *Recueil des Traités*, etc., published by the Russian foreign office, 1898, vol. xii., containing many graphic particulars of these events.

government had an agent who while seeming to follow instructions in the narrow letter baffled them in their spirit. In the autumn of 1853 Lord Aberdeen wrote to Graham, 'I fear I must renounce the sanguine view I have hitherto taken of the Eastern question; for nothing can be more alarming than the present prospect. I thought that we should have been able to conquer Stratford, but I begin to fear that the reverse will be the case, and that he will succeed in defeating us. Although at our wit's end, Clarendon and I are still labouring in the cause of peace; but really to contend at once with the pride of the Emperor, the fanaticism of the Turks, and the dishonesty of Stratford is almost a hopeless attempt.'[1] This description, when he saw it nearly forty years later, seems to have struck Mr. Gladstone as harsh. Though he agreed that the passage could hardly be omitted, he confessed his surprise that Lord Aberdeen should have applied the word dishonesty to Lord Stratford. He suggested the addition of a note that should recognise the general character of Lord Stratford, and should point out that prejudice and passion, by their blinding powers, often produce in the mind effects like those proper to dishonesty.[2] Perhaps we may find this a hard saying. Doubtless when he comes to praise and blame, the political historian must make due allowance for his actors; and charity is the grandest of illuminants. Still hard truth stands first, and amiable analysis of the psychology of a diplomatic agent who lets loose a flood of mischief on mankind is by no means what interests us most about him. Why not call things by their right names?[3]

In his private letters (November) Stratford boldly exhibited his desire for war, and declared that 'the war, to be successful, must be a very comprehensive war on the part of England and France' Well might the Queen say to the prime minister that it had become a serious question whether they were justified in allowing Lord Stratford any longer to remain in a situation that enabled him to frustrate all the efforts of his government for peace. Yet here, as many

[1] Stanmore, *Earl of Aberdeen*, pp. 270–1.

[2] To Sir A. Gordon, Aug. 31, 1892.

[3] See Stanmore, p. 253.

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another time in these devious manœuvres, that fearful dilemma interposed—inseparable in its many forms from all collective action whether in cabinet or party; so fit to test to the very uttermost all the moral fortitude, all the wisdom of a minister, his sense of proportion, his strength of will, his prudent pliancy of judgment, his power of balance, his sure perception of the ruling fact. The dilemma here is patent. To recall Lord Stratford would be to lose Lord Palmerston and Lord John; to lose them would be to break up the government; to break up the government would be to sunder the slender thread on which the chances of peace were hanging.[1] The thought, in short, of the high-minded Aberdeen striving against hope to play a steadfast and pacific part in a scene so sinister, among actors of such equivocal or crooked purpose, recalls nothing so much as the memorable picture long ago of Maria Theresa beset and baffled by her Kaunitzes and Thuguts, Catherines, Josephs, great Fredericks, Grand Turks, and wringing her hands over the consummation of an iniquitous policy to which the perversity of man and circumstance had driven her.

As the proceedings in the cabinet dragged on through the winter, new projects were mooted. The ground was shifted to what Lord Stratford had called a comprehensive war upon Russia. Some of the cabinet began to aim at a transformation of the policy. It was suggested that the moment should be seized to obtain not merely the observance by Russia of her treaty obligations to Turkey, but a revision and modification of the treaties in Turkish interests. This is the well-known way in which, ever since the world called civilised began, the area of conflict is widened. If one plea is eluded or is satisfied, another is found; and so the peacemakers are at each step checkmated by the warmakers. The Powers of central Europe were immovable, with motives, interests, designs, each of their own. Austria had reasons of irresistible force for keeping peace with Russia. A single victory of Russia in Austrian Poland would enable her to march direct upon Vienna. Austria

[1] This is clearly worked out by Lord Stanmore, p. 254, etc.

had no secure alliance with Prussia; on the contrary, her German rival opposed her on this question, and was incessantly canvassing the smaller states against her in respect to it. The French Emperor was said to be revolving a plan for bribing Austria out of Northern Italy by the gift of Moldavia and Wallachia. All was intricate and tortuous. The view in Downing Street soon expanded to this, that it would be a shame to England and to France unless the Czar were made not only to abandon his demands, and to evacuate the Principalities, but also to renounce some of the stipulations in former treaties on which his present arrogant pretensions had been formed. In the future, the guarantees for the Christian races should be sought in a treaty not between Sultan and Czar, but between the Sultan and the five Powers.

Men in the cabinet and men out of it, some with ardour, others with acquiescence, approved of war for different reasons, interchangeable in controversial value and cumulative in effect. Some believed, and more pretended to believe, that Turkey abounded in the elements and energies of self-reform, and insisted that she should have the chance. Others were moved by vague general sympathy with a weak power assailed by a strong one, and that one, moreover, the same tyrannous strength that held an iron heel on the neck of prostrate Poland; that only a few years before had despatched her legions to help Austria against the rising for freedom and national right in Hungary; that urged intolerable demands upon the Sultan for the surrender of the Hungarian refugees. Others again counted the power of Russia already exorbitant, and saw in its extension peril to Europe, and mischief to the interests of England. Russia on the Danube, they said, means Russia on the Indus. Russia at Constantinople would mean a complete revolution in the balance of power in the Mediterranean, and to an alarmed vision, a Russia that had only crossed the Pruth was as menacing as if her Cossacks were already encamped in permanence upon the shores of the Bosphorus.

Along with the anxieties of the Eastern question, ministers were divided upon the subject of parliamentary reform.

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Some, including the prime minister, went with Lord John Russell in desiring to push a Reform bill. Others, especially Palmerston, were strongly adverse. Mr. Gladstone mainly followed the head of the government, but he was still a conservative, and still member for a tory constituency, and he followed his leader rather mechanically and without enthusiasm. Lord Palmerston was suspected by some of his colleagues of raising the war-cry in hopes of drowning the demand for reform. In the middle of December (1853) he resigned upon reform,[1] but nine days later he withdrew his resignation and returned. In the interval news of the Russian attack on the Turkish fleet at Sinope (November 30) had arrived — an attack justified by precedent and the rule of war. But public feeling in England had risen to fever; the French Emperor in exacting and peremptory language had declared that if England did not take joint action with him in the Black Sea, he would either act alone or else bring his fleet home. The British cabinet yielded, and came to the cardinal decision (Dec. 22) to enter the Black Sea. 'I was rather stunned,' Gladstone wrote to Sidney Herbert next day, 'by yesterday's cabinet. I have scarcely got my breath again. I told Lord Aberdeen that I had had wishes that Palmerston were back again on account of the Eastern question.'

Here is a glimpse of this time: —

*Nov.* 23, '53. — Cabinet. Reform discussed largely, amicably, and satisfactorily on the whole. *Dec.* 16. — Hawarden. Off at 9 A.M. Astounded by a note from A. Gordon. [Palmerston had resigned the day before.] After dinner went to the admiralty, $10\frac{1}{2}$–$1\frac{1}{2}$, where Lord Aberdeen, Newcastle, Graham, and I went over the late events and went over the course for to-morrow's cabinet. *Dec.* 21. — Called on Lord Palmerston, and sat an hour. 22. — Cabinet, 2–$7\frac{1}{2}$, on Eastern Question. Palmerston and reform. A day of no small matter for reflection. *Jan.* 4, 1854. — To Windsor. I was the only guest, and thus was promoted to sit by the Queen at dinner. She was most gracious, and above all so thoroughly natural.

[1] Ashley's *Life of Palmerston*, ii. p. 270.

On the decision of Dec. 22, Sir Charles Wood says: —

We had then a long discussion on the question of occupying the Black Sea, as proposed by France, and it seemed to me to be such a tissue of confusions that I advocated the simple course of doing so. Gladstone could not be persuaded to agree to this, in spite of a strong argument of Newcastle's. Gladstone's objection being to our being hampered by any engagement. His scheme was that our occupying the Black Sea was to be made dependent, in the first place, on the Turks having acceded to the Vienna proposals, or at any rate to their agreeing to be bound by any basis of peace on which the English and French governments agreed. Newcastle and I said we thought this would bind us much more to the Turks than if we occupied the Black Sea as part of our own measures, adopted for our own purposes, and without any engagement to the Turks, under which we should be if they accepted our conditions. Gladstone said he could be no party to unconditional occupation; so it ended in our telling France that we would occupy the Black Sea, that is, prevent the passage of any ships or munitions of war by the Russians, but that we trusted she would join us in enforcing the above condition on the Turks. If they agreed, then we were to occupy the Black Sea; if they did not, we were to reconsider the question, and then determine what to do. Clarendon saw Walewski, who was quite satisfied.

By the middle of February war was certain. Mr. Gladstone wrote an account of a conversation that he had at this time with Lord Aberdeen: —

*Feb.* 22. — Lord Aberdeen sent for me to-day and informed me that Lord Palmerston had been with him to say that he had made up his mind to vote for putting off (without entering into the question of its merits) the consideration of the Reform bill for the present year. [Conversation on Reform.][1]

He then asked me whether I did not think that he might himself withdraw from office when we came to the declaration of war. All along he had been acting against his feelings, but still defensively. He did not think that he could regard the offensive in the same light, and was disposed to retire. I said

[1] See Appendix.

BOOK IV. 1854.

that a defensive war might involve offensive operations, and that a declaration of war placed the case on no new ground of principle. It did not make the quarrel, but merely announced it, notifying to the world (of itself justifiable) a certain state of facts which would have arrived. He said all wars were called or pretended to be defensive. I said that if the war was untruly so called, then our position was false; but that the war did not become less defensive from our declaring it, or from our entering upon offensive operations. To retire therefore upon such a declaration, would be to retire upon no ground warrantable and conceivable by reason. It would not be standing on a principle, whereas any man would require a distinct principle to justify him in giving up at this moment the service of the crown. He asked: How could he bring himself to fight for the Turks? I said we were not fighting for the Turks, but we were warning Russia off the forbidden ground. That if, indeed, we undertook to put down the Christians under Turkish rule by force, then we should be fighting for the Turks; but to this I for one could be no party. He said if I saw a way for him to get out, he hoped I would mention it to him. I replied that my own views of war so much agreed with his, and I felt such a horror of bloodshed, that I had thought the matter over incessantly for myself. We stand, I said, upon the ground that the Emperor has invaded countries not his own, inflicted wrong on Turkey, and what I feel much more, most cruel wrong on the wretched inhabitants of the Principalities; that war had ensued and was raging with all its horrors; that we had procured for the Emperor an offer of honourable terms of peace which he had refused; that we were not going to extend the conflagration (but I had to correct myself as to the Baltic), but to apply more power for its extinction, and this I hoped in conjunction with all the great Powers of Europe. That I, for one, could not shoulder the musket against the Christian subjects of the Sultan, and must there take my stand. (Not even, I had already told him, if he agreed to such a course, could I bind myself to follow him in it.) He said Granville and Wood had spoken to him in the same sense. I added that S. Herbert and Graham probably would adhere; perhaps Argyll and Molesworth, and even others might be added.

Ellice had been with him and told him that J. Russell and Palmerston were preparing to contend for his place. Ellice himself, deprecating Lord Aberdeen's retirement, anticipated that if it took place Lord Palmerston would get the best of it, and drive Lord John out of the field by means of his war popularity, though Lord John had made the speech of Friday to put himself up in this point of view with the country.

In consequence of what I had said to him about Newcastle, he [Aberdeen] had watched him, and had told the Queen to look to him as her minister at some period or other; which, though afraid of him (as well as of me) about Church matters, she was prepared to do. I said I had not changed my opinion of Newcastle as he had done of Lord John Russell, but I had been disappointed and pained at the recent course of his opinions about the matter of the war. At my house last Wednesday he [Newcastle] declared openly for putting down by force the Christians of European Turkey. Yes, Lord Aberdeen replied; but he thought him the description of man who would discharge well the duties of that office. In this I agree.[1]

A few days later (March 3) Lord John Russell, by way of appeasing Aberdeen's incessant self-reproach, told him that the only course that could have prevented war would have been to counsel the Turks to acquiesce, and not to allow the British fleet to quit Malta. 'But that was a course,' Lord John continued, 'to which Lansdowne, Palmerston, Clarendon, Newcastle, and I would not have consented; so that you would only have broken up your government if you had insisted upon it.' Then the speaker added his belief that the Czar, even after the Turk's acquiescence and submission, if we could have secured so much, would have given the Sultan six months' respite, and no more. None of these arguments ever eased the mind of Lord Aberdeen. Even

[1] Lord Blachford in his *Letters* says of Newcastle (p. 225): 'An honest and honourable man, a thorough gentleman in all his feelings and ways, and considerate of all about him. He respected other people's position, but was sensible of his own; and his familiarity, friendly enough, was not such as invited response. It was said of him that he did not remember his rank unless you forgot it. In political administration he was painstaking, clear-headed, and just. But his abilities were moderate, and he did not see how far they were from being sufficient for the management of great affairs, which, however, he was always ambitious of handling.' See also Selborne's *Memorials*, ii. pp. 257–8.

BOOK IV. 1854.

in his last interview with the departing ambassador of the Czar, he told him how bitterly he regretted, first, the original despatch of the fleet from Malta to Besika Bay (July 1853); and second that he had not sent Lord Granville to St. Petersburg immediately on the failure of Menschikoff at Constantinople (May 1853), in order to carry on personal negotiations with the Emperor.[1]

An ultimatum demanding the evacuation of the Principalities was despatched to St. Petersburg by England and France, the Czar kept a haughty silence, and at the end of March war was declared. In the event the Principalities were evacuated a couple of months later, but the state of war continued. On September 14, English, French, and Turkish troops disembarked on the shores of the Crimea, and on the 20th of the month was fought the battle of the Alma. 'I cannot help repeating to you,' Mr. Gladstone wrote to Lord Palmerston (Oct. 4, 1854), 'which I hope you will forgive, the thanks I offered at an earlier period, for the manner in which you urged — when we were amidst many temptations to far more embarrassing and less effective proceedings — the duty of concentrating our strokes upon the heart and centre of the war at Sebastopol.'[2] In the same month Bright wrote the solid, wise, and noble letter that brought him so much obloquy then, and stands as one of the memorials of his fame now.[3] Mr. Gladstone wrote to his brother Robertson upon it: —

*Nov.* 7, 1854. — I thought Bright's letter both an able and a manly one, and though I cannot go his lengths, I respect and sympathise with the spirit in which it originated. I think he should draw a distinction between petty meddlings of our own, or interferences for selfish purposes, and an operation like this which really is in support of the public law of Europe. I agree with him in some of the retrospective part of his letter.

Then came the dark days of the Crimean winter.

In his very deliberate vindication of the policy of the Crimean war composed in 1887, Mr. Gladstone warmly denies

[1] Martens.

[2] The equivocal honour of originality seems to belong to the French, but they had allowed the plan to slumber. — De La Gorce, *Hist. du second Empire*, i. pp. 231–3.

[3] It is given in *Speeches*, i. p. 529. Oct. 29, 1854.

either that the ship of state drifted instead of being steered, or that the cabinet was in continual conflict with itself at successive stages of the negotiation.[1] He had witnessed, he declares, much more of sharp or warm argument in every other of the seven cabinets to which he belonged.[2] In 1881 he said to the present writer: 'As a member of the Aberdeen cabinet I never can admit that divided opinions in that cabinet led to hesitating action, or brought on the war. I do not mean that all were always and on all points of the same mind. But I have known much sharper divisions in a cabinet that has worked a great question honourably and energetically, and I should confidently say, whether the negotiations were well or ill conducted, that considering their great difficulty they were worked with little and not much conflict. It must be borne in mind that Lord Aberdeen subsequently developed opinions that were widely severed from those that had guided us, but these never appeared in the cabinet or at the time.' Still he admits that this practical harmony could much less truly be affirmed of the four ministers especially concerned with foreign affairs;[3] that is to say, of the only ministers whose discussions mattered. It is certainly impossible to contend that Aberdeen was not in pretty continual conflict, strong and marked though not heated, with these three main coadjutors. Whether it be true to say that the cabinet drifted, depends on the precise meaning of a word. It is undoubtedly true that it steered a course bringing the ship into waters that the captain most eagerly wished to avoid, and each tack carried it farther away from the expected haven. Winds and waves were too many for them. We may perhaps agree with Mr. Gladstone that as it was feeling rather than argument that raised the Crimean war into popularity, so it is feeling and not argument that has plunged it into the 'abyss of odium.' When we come to a period twenty years after this war was over, we shall see that Mr. Gladstone found out how little had time changed the public temper, how little had events taught their lesson.

[1] *Eng. Hist. Rev.* April 1887. This article was submitted to the Duke of Argyll and Lord Granville for correction before publication.

[2] The cabinet of 1892 was his eighth.

[3] Aberdeen, Russell, Palmerston, Clarendon.

## CHAPTER IV

### OXFORD REFORM — OPEN CIVIL SERVICE

(*1854*)

> To rear up minds with aspirations and faculties above the herd, capable of leading on their countrymen to greater achievements in virtue, intelligence, and social well-being; to do this, and likewise so to educate the leisured classes of the community generally, that they may participate as far as possible in the qualities of these superior spirits, and be prepared to appreciate them, and follow in their steps — these are purposes requiring institutions of education placed above dependence on the immediate pleasure of that very multitude whom they are designed to elevate. These are the ends for which endowed universities are desirable; they are those which all endowed universities profess to aim at; and great is their disgrace, if, having undertaken this task, and claiming credit for fulfilling it, they leave it unfulfilled. — J. S. Mill.

BOOK IV. 1850.

The last waves of the tide of reform that had been flowing for a score of years, now at length reached the two ancient universities. The Tractarian revival with all its intense preoccupations had given the antique Oxford a respite, but the hour struck, and the final effort of the expiring whigs in their closing days of power was the summons to Oxford and Cambridge to set their houses in order. Oxford had been turned into the battle-field on which contending parties in the church had at her expense fought for mastery. The result was curious. The nature of the theological struggle, by quickening mind within the university, had roused new forces; the antagonism between anglo-catholic and puritan helped, as it had done two centuries before, to breed the latitudinarian; a rising school in the sphere of thought and criticism rapidly made themselves an active party in the sphere of affairs; and Mr. Gladstone found himself forced

to do the work of the very liberalism which his own theological leaders and allies had first organised themselves to beat down and extinguish.

In 1850 Lord John Russell, worked upon by a persevering minority in Oxford, startled the House of Commons, delighted the liberals, and angered and dismayed the authorities of the powerful corporations thus impugned, by the announcement of a commission under the crown to inquire into their discipline, state, and revenues, and to report whether any action by crown and parliament could further promote the interests of religion and sound learning in these venerable shrines. This was the first step in a long journey towards the nationalisation of the universities, and the disestablishment of the church of England in what seemed the best fortified of all her strongholds.

After elaborate correspondence with both liberal and tory sections in Oxford, Mr. Gladstone rose in his place and denounced the proposed commission as probably against the law, and certainly odious in the eye of the constitution. He undertook to tear in tatters the various modern precedents advanced by the government for their purpose; scouted the alleged visitorial power of the crown; insisted that it would blight future munificence; argued that defective instruction with freedom and self-government would, in the choice of evils, be better than the most perfect mechanism secured by parliamentary interference; admitted that what the universities had done for learning was perhaps less than it might have been, but they had done as much as answered the circumstances and exigencies of the country. When we looked at the lawyers, the divines, the statesmen of England, even if some might judge them inferior in mere scholastic and technical acquirements, why need we be ashamed of the cradles in which they were mainly nurtured? He closed with a triumphant and moving reference to Peel (dead a fortnight before), the most distinguished son of Oxford in the present century, and beyond all other men the high representative and the true type of the genius of the British House of Commons.[1]

[1] July 18, 1850.

BOOK IV. 1850.

In truth no worse case was ever more strongly argued, and fortunately the speech is to be recorded as the last manifesto, on a high theme and on a broad scale, of that toryism from which this wonderful pilgrim had started on his shining progress. It is just to add that the party in Oxford who resisted the commission was also the party most opposed to Mr. Gladstone, and further that the view of the crown having no right to issue such a commission *in invitos* was shared with him by Sir Robert Peel.[1] Of this debate, Arthur Stanley (a strong supporter of the measure), tells us: 'The ministerial speeches were very feeble. . . . Gladstone's was very powerful; he said, in the most effective manner, anything which could be said against the commission. His allusion to Peel was very touching, and the House responded to it by profound and sympathetic silence. . . . Heywood's closing speech was happily drowned in the roar of "Divide," so that nothing could be heard save the name of "Cardinal Wolsey" thrice repeated.'[2] The final division was taken on the question of the adjournment, when the government had a majority of 22. (July 18, 1850.)

II

In Oxford the party of 'organised torpor' did not yield without a struggle. They were clamorous on the sanctity of property; contemptuous of the doctrine of the rights of parliament over national domains; and protestant collegians subsisting on ancient Roman catholic endowments edified the world on the iniquity of setting aside the pious founder. They submitted an elaborate case to the most eminent counsel of the day, and counsel advised that the commission was not constitutional, not legal, and not such as the members of the university were bound to obey. The question of duty apart from legal obligation the lawyers did not answer, but they suggested that a petition might be addressed to the crown, praying that the instrument might be cancelled. The petition was duly prepared, and duly made no difference. Many of the academic authorities were recalcitrant, but this made no difference either, nor did the

[1] Letter to Bishop Davidson, June 11, 1891.

[2] *Life*, i. p. 420.

Bishop of Exeter's hot declaration that the proceeding had 'no parallel since the fatal attempt of King James II. to subject the colleges to his unhallowed control.' The commissioners, of whom Tait and Jeune seem to have been the leading spirits, with Stanley and Mr. Goldwin Smith for secretaries, conducted their operations with tact, good sense, and zeal. At the end of two years (April 1852) the inquiry was completed and the report made public — one of the high landmarks in the history of our modern English life and growth. 'When you consider,' Stanley said to Jowett, 'the den of lions through which the raw material had to be dragged, much will be excused. In fact the great work was to finish it at all. There is a harsh, unfriendly tone about the whole which ought, under better circumstances, to have been avoided, but which may, perhaps, have the advantage of propitiating the radicals.' [1]

Mr. Gladstone thought it one of the ablest productions submitted in his recollection to parliament, but the proposals of change too manifold and complicated. The evidence he found more moderate and less sweeping in tone than the report, but it only deepened his conviction of the necessity of important and, above all, early changes. He did not cease urging his friends at Oxford to make use of this golden opportunity for reforming the university from within, and warning them that delay would be dearly purchased.[2] 'Gladstone's connection with Oxford,' said Sir George Lewis, 'is now exercising a singular influence upon the politics of the university. Most of his high church supporters stick to him, and (insomuch as it is difficult to struggle against the current) he is liberalising them, instead of their torifying him. He is giving them a push forwards instead of their giving him a pull backwards.' [3]

The originators of the commission were no longer in office, but things had gone too far for their successors to burke what had been done.[4] The Derby government put into the

[1] *Life of Stanley*, i. p. 432.

[2] Letters to Graham, July 30, 1852, and Dr. Haddan, Aug. 14 and Sept. 29, 1852.

[3] *Letters*, March 26, 1853, p. 261.

[4] Interesting particulars of this memorable commission are to be found in the *Life of Archbishop Tait*, i. pp. 156–170.

BOOK IV. 1853.

Queen's speech, in November (1852), a paragraph informing parliament that the universities had been invited to examine the recommendations of the report. After a year's time had been given them to consider, it became the duty of the Aberdeen government to frame a bill. The charge fell upon Mr. Gladstone as member for Oxford, and in the late autumn of 1853 he set to work. In none of the enterprises of his life was he more industrious or energetic. Before the middle of December he forwarded to Lord John Russell what he called a rude draft, but the rude draft contained the kernel of the plan that was ultimately carried, with a suggestion even of the names of the commissioners to whom operations were to be confided. 'It is marvellous to me,' wrote Dr. Jeune to him (Dec. 21, 1853), 'how you can give attention so minute to university affairs at such a crisis. Do great things become to great men from the force of habit, what their ordinary cares are to ordinary persons?' As he began, so he advanced, listening to everybody, arguing with everybody, flexible, persistent, clear, practical, fervid, unconquerable. 'I fear,' Lord John Russell wrote to him (March 27), 'my mind is exclusively occupied with the war and the Reform bill, and yours with university reform.' Perhaps, unluckily for the country, this was true. 'My whole heart is in the Oxford bill,' Mr. Gladstone writes (March 29); 'it is my consolation under the pain with which I view the character my office [the exchequer] is assuming under the circumstances of war.' 'Gladstone has been surprising everybody here,' writes a conspicuous high churchman from Oxford, 'by the ubiquity of his correspondence. Three-fourths of the colleges have been in communication with him, on various parts of the bill more or less affecting themselves. He answers everybody by return of post, fully and at length, quite entering into their case, and showing the greatest acquaintance with it.'[1] 'As one of your burgesses,' he told them, 'I stand upon the line that divides

[1] Mozley, *Letters*, p. 220. Mr. Gladstone preserved 560 letters and documents relating to the preparation and passing of the Oxford University bill. Among them are 350 copies of his own letters written between Dec. 1853 and Dec. 1854, and 170 letters received by him during the same period.

Oxford from the outer world, and as a sentinel I cry out to tell what I see from that position.' What he saw was that if this bill were thrown out, no other half so favourable would ever again be brought in.

The scheme accepted by the cabinet was in essentials Mr. Gladstone's own. Jowett at the earliest stage sent him a comprehensive plan, and soon after, saw Lord John (Jan. 6). 'I must own,' writes the latter to Gladstone, 'I was much struck by the clearness and completeness of his views.' The difference between Jowett's plan and Mr. Gladstone's was on the highly important point of machinery. Jowett, who all his life had a weakness for getting and keeping authority into his own hands, or the hands of those whom he could influence, contended that after parliament had settled principles, Oxford itself could be trusted to settle details far better than a little body of great personages from outside, unacquainted with special wants and special interests. Mr. Gladstone, on the other hand, invented the idea of an executive commission with statutory powers. The two plans were printed and circulated, and the balance of opinion in the cabinet went decisively for Mr. Gladstone's scheme. The discussion between him and Jowett, ranging over the whole field of the bill, was maintained until its actual production, in many interviews and much correspondence. In drawing the clauses Mr. Gladstone received the help of Bethell, the solicitor-general, at whose suggestion Phillimore and Thring were called in for further aid in what was undoubtedly a task of exceptional difficulty. The process brought into clearer light the truth discerned by Mr. Gladstone from the first, that the enormous number of diverse institutions that had grown up in Oxford made resort to what he called sub-legislation inevitable; that is to say, they were too complex for parliament, and could only be dealt with by delegation to executive act.

It is untrue to say that Oxford as a place of education had no influence on the mind of the country; it had immense influence, but that influence was exactly what it ought not to have been. Instead of stimulating it checked, instead of expanding it stereotyped. Even for the church

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it had failed to bring unity, for it was from Oxford that the opinions had sprung that seemed to be rending the church in twain. The regeneration introduced by this momentous measure has been overlaid by the strata of subsequent reforms. Enough to say that the objects obtained were the deposition of the fossils and drones, and a renovated constitution on the representative principle for the governing body; the wakening of a huge mass of sleeping endowments; the bestowal of college emoluments only on excellence tested by competition, and associated with active duties; the reorganisation or re-creation of professorial teaching; the removal of local preferences and restrictions. Beyond these aspects of reform, Mr. Gladstone was eager for the proposed right to establish private halls, as a change calculated to extend the numbers and strength of the university, and as settling the much disputed question, whether the scale of living could not be reduced, and university education brought within reach of classes of moderate means. These hopes proved to be exaggerated, but they illustrate his constant and lifelong interest in the widest possible diffusion of all good things in the world from university training down to a Cook's tour.

Mr. Gladstone seems to have pressed his draftsmen hard, as he sometimes did. Bethell returning to him 'the *disjecta membra* of this unfortunate bill,' tells him that he is too deeply attached to him to care for a few marks of impatience, and adds, 'write a few kind words to Phillimore, for he really loves you and feels this matter deeply.' Oxford, scene of so many agitations for a score of years past, was once more seized with consternation, stupefaction, enthusiasm. A few private copies of the draft were sent down from London for criticism. On the vice-chancellor it left 'an impression of sorrow and sad anticipations'; it opened deplorable prospects for the university, for the church, for religion, for righteousness. The dean of Christ Church thought it not merely inexpedient, but unjust and tyrannical. Jowett, on the other hand, was convinced that it must satisfy all reasonable reformers, and added emphatically in writing to Mr. Gladstone, 'It is to yourself and Lord John that the university

will be indebted for the greatest boon that it has ever received.' After the introduction of the bill by Lord John Russell, the obscurantists made a final effort to call down one of their old pelting hailstorms. A petition against the bill was submitted to convocation; happily it passed by a majority of no more than two.

At length the blessed day of the second reading came. The ever zealous Arthur Stanley was present. 'A superb speech from Gladstone,' he records, 'in which, for the first time, all the arguments from our report were worked up in the most effective manner. He vainly endeavoured to reconcile his present with his former position. But, with this exception, I listened to his speech with the greatest delight. . . . To behold one's old enemies slaughtered before one's face with the most irresistible weapons was quite intoxicating. One great charm of his speaking is its exceeding good-humour. There is great vehemence but no bitterness.'[1] An excellent criticism of many, perhaps most, of his speeches.

'It must ever be borne in mind,' Mr. Gladstone wrote to Lord John at the outset, 'with respect to our old universities that history, law, and usage with them form such a manifold, diversified, and complex mass, that it is not one subject but a world of subjects that we have to deal with in approaching them.' And he pointed out that if any clever lawyer such as Butt or Cairns were employed to oppose the bill systematically, debate would run to such lengths as to make it hopeless. This was a point of view that Mr. Gladstone's more exacting and abstract critics now, and many another time, forgot: they forgot that, whatever else you may say of a bill, after all it is a thing that is to be carried through parliament. Everybody had views of his own. A characteristic illustration of Mr. Gladstone's temper in the arduous work of practical legislation to which so much of the energies of his life was devoted, is worth giving here from a letter of this date to Burgon of Oriel. Nobody answers better to the rare combination, in Bacon's words, of a 'glorious nature that doth put life into business, with a solid and

[1] *Life*, i. p. 434.

BOOK IV.

sober nature that hath as much of the ballast as of the sail': —

1854.

> Sometimes it may be necessary in dealing with a very ancient institution to make terms, as it were, between such an institution and the actual spirit of the age. This may be in certain circumstances a necessary, but it can never be a satisfactory, process. It is driving a bargain, and somewhat of a wretched bargain. But I really do not find or feel that this is the case now before us. In that case, my view, right or wrong, is this: that Oxford is far behind her duties or capabilities, not because her working men work so little, but because so large a proportion of her children do not work at all, so large a proportion of her resources remains practically dormant, and her present constitution is so ill-adapted to developing her real but latent powers. What I therefore anticipate is not the weakening of her distinctive principles, not the diminution of her labour, already great, that she discharges for the church and for the land, but a great expansion, a great invigoration, a great increase of her numbers, a still greater increase of her moral force, and of her hold upon the heart and mind of the country.

Pusey seems to have talked of the university as ruined and overthrown by a parricidal hand; Oxford would be lost to the church; she would have to take refuge in colleges away from the university. Oxford had now received its death-blow from Mr. Gladstone and the government to which he belonged, and he could no longer support at election times the worker of such evil, and must return to that inactivity in things political, from which only love and confidence for Mr. Gladstone had roused him. 'Personally,' the good man adds, 'I must always love you.' To Pusey, and to all who poured reproach upon him from this side, Mr. Gladstone replied with inexhaustible patience. He never denied that parliamentary intervention was an evil, but he submitted to it in order to avert greater evil. 'If the church of England has not strength enough to keep upright, this will soon appear in the troubles of emancipated Oxford: if she has, it will come out to the joy of us all in the immensely augmented energy and power of the

university for good. If Germanism and Arnoldism are now to carry the day at Oxford (I mean supposing the bill is carried into law), they will carry it fairly ; let them win and wear her (God forbid, however); but if she has a heart true to the faith her hand will be stronger ten times over than it has been heretofore, in doing battle. . . . Nor am I saddened by the pamphlet of a certain Mr. —— which I have been reading to-day. It has more violence than venom, and also much more violence than strength. I often feel how hard it is on divines to be accused of treachery and baseness, because they do not, like *us*, get it every day and so become case-hardened against it.'

In parliament the craft laboured heavily in cross-seas. 'I have never known,' says its pilot, 'a measure so foolishly discussed in committee.' Nor was oil cast upon the waters by its friends. By the end of May Mr. Gladstone and Lord John saw that they must take in canvas. At this point a new storm broke. It was impossible that a measure on such a subject could fail to awaken the ever ready quarrel between the two camps into which the English establishment, for so many generations, has so unhappily divided the life of the nation. From the first, the protestant dissenters had been extremely sore at the absence from the bill of any provision for their admission to the remodelled university. Bright, the most illustrious of them, told the House of Commons that he did not care whether so pusillanimous and tinkering an affair as this was passed or not. Dissenters, he said with scorn, are expected always to manifest too much of those inestimable qualities which are spoken of in the Epistle to the Corinthians: 'To hope all things, to believe all things, and to endure all things.'

More discredit than he deserved fell upon Mr. Gladstone for this obnoxious defect. In announcing the commission of inquiry four years before, Lord John as prime minister had expressly said that the improvement of the universities should be treated as a subject by itself, and that the admission of dissenters ought to be reserved for future and separate consideration. Writing to Mr. Gladstone (Jan. 1854) he said, 'I do not want to stir the question in this bill,' but

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he would support a proposal in a separate bill by which the halls might be the means of admitting dissenters. Mr. Gladstone himself professed to take no strong line either way; but in a parliamentary case of this kind to take no line is not materially different from a line in effect unfriendly. Arthur Stanley pressed him as hard as he could. 'Justice to the university,' said Mr. Gladstone in reply, 'demands that it should be allowed to consider the question for itself. . . . Indeed, while I believe that the admission of dissenters without the breaking up of the religious teaching and the government of the university would be a great good, I am also of opinion that to give effect to that measure by forcible intervention of parliament would be a great evil. Whether it is an evil that must some day or other be encountered, the time has not yet, I think, arrived for determining.' The letter concludes with a remark of curious bearing upon the temper of that age. 'The very words,' he says to Stanley, 'which you have let fall upon your paper — "Roman catholics" — used in this connection, were enough to burn it through and through, considering we have *a parliament which, were the measure of* 1829 *not law at this moment, would I think probably refuse to make it law.*' There is no reason to think this an erroneous view. Perhaps it would not be extravagant even to-day.

What Mr. Gladstone called 'the evil of parliamentary interference' did not tarry, and on the report stage of the bill, a clause removing the theological test at matriculation was carried (June 22) against the government by ninety-one. The size of the majority and the diversified material of which it was composed left the government no option but to yield. 'Parliament having now unhappily determined to legislate upon the subject,' Mr. Gladstone writes to the provost of Oriel, 'it seems to me, I may add it seems to my colleagues, best for the interests of the university that we should now make some endeavour to settle the whole question and so preclude, if we can, any pretext for renewed agitation.' 'The basis of that settlement,' he went on in a formula which he tenaciously reiterated to all his correspondents, and which is a landmark in the long history of

his dealing with the question, 'should be that the whole teaching and governing function in the university and in the colleges, halls, and private halls, should be retained, as now, in the church of England, but that everything outside the governing and teaching functions, whether in the way of degrees, honours, or emoluments, should be left open.' The new clause he described as 'one of those incomplete arrangements that seem to suit the practical habits of this country, and which by taking the edge off a matter of complaint, are often found virtually to dispose of it for a length of time.' In the end the church of England test was removed, not only on admission to the university, but from the bachelor's degree. Tests in other forms remained, as we shall in good time perceive. 'We have proceeded,' Mr. Gladstone wrote, 'in the full belief that the means of applying a church test to fellowships in colleges are clear and ample.' So they were, and so remained, until seventeen years later in the life of an administration of his own the obnoxious fetter was struck off.

The debates did not close without at least one characteristic masterpiece from Mr. Disraeli. He had not taken a division on the second reading, but he executed with entire gravity all the regulation manœuvres of opposition, and his appearance on the page of Hansard relieves a dull discussion. If government, he asked, could defer a reform of the constitution (referring to the withdrawal of Lord John's bill) why should they hurry to reform the universities? The talk about the erudite professors of Germany as so superior to Oxford was nonsense. The great men of Germany became professors only because they could not become members of parliament. 'We, on the contrary, are a nation of action, and you may depend upon it, that though you may give an Oxford professor two thousand a year instead of two hundred, still ambition in England will look to public life and to the House of Commons, and not to professors' chairs.' The moment the revolution of 1848 gave the German professors a chance, see how they rushed into political conventions and grasped administrative offices. Again, the principle of the bill was the laying of an unhallowed hand upon the ark of

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the universities, and wore in effect the hideous aspect of the never-to-be-forgotten appropriation clause. If he were asked whether he would rather have Oxford free with all its imperfections, or an Oxford without imperfections but under the control of the government, he would reply, 'Give me Oxford free and independent, with all its anomalies and imperfections.' An excellently worded but amusingly irrelevant passage about Voltaire and Rousseau, and the land that was enlightened by the one and inflamed by the other, brought the curious performance to a solemn close. High fantastic trifling of this sort, though it may divert a later generation to whose legislative bills it can do no harm, helps to explain the deep disfavour with which Disraeli was regarded by his severe and strenuous opponent.

'The admiration of posterity,' Dr. Jeune wrote to Mr. Gladstone, 'would be greatly increased if men hereafter could know what wisdom, what firmness, what temper, what labour your success has required.' More than this, it was notorious that Mr. Gladstone was bravely risking his seat. This side of the matter Jeune made plain to him. 'Had I foreseen in 1847,' replied Mr. Gladstone (*Broadstairs*, Aug. 26, 1854), 'that church controversies which I then hoped were on the decline, were really about to assume a fiercer glare and a wider range than they had done before, I should not have been presumptuous enough to face the contingencies of such a seat at such a time.' As things stood he was bound to hold on. With dauntless confidence that never failed him, he was convinced that no long time would suffice to scatter the bugbears, and the bill would be nothing but a source of strength to any one standing in reputed connection with it. To Dr. Jeune when the battle was over he expresses 'his warm sense of the great encouragement and solid advantage which at every stage he had derived from his singularly ready and able help.' To Jowett and Goldwin Smith he acknowledged a hardly lower degree of obligation. The last twenty years, wrote a shrewd and expert sage in 1866, 'have seen more improvement in the temper and teaching of Oxford than the three centuries since the Reformation. This has undoubtedly been vastly promoted by the Reform

bill of 1854, or at least by one enactment in it, the abolition of close fellowships, which has done more for us than all the other enactments of the measure put together.'[1] 'The indirect effects,' says the same writer in words of pregnant praise, 'in stimulating the spirit of improvement among us, have been no less important than the specific reforms enacted by it.'[2]

III

Another of the most far-reaching changes of this era of reform affected the civil service. J. S. Mill, then himself an official at the India House, did not hesitate 'to hail the plan of throwing open the civil service to competition as one of the greatest improvements in public affairs ever proposed by a government.' On the system then reigning, civil employment under the crown was in all the offices the result of patronage, though in some, and those not the more important of them, nominees were partially tested by qualifying examination and periods of probation. The eminent men who held what were called the staff appointments in the service — the Merivales, Taylors, Farrers — were introduced from without, with the obvious implication that either the civil service trained up within its own ranks a poor breed, or else that the meritorious men were discouraged and kept back by the sight of prizes falling to outsiders. Mr. Gladstone was not slow to point out that the existing system if it brought eminent men in, had driven men like Manning and Spedding out. What patronage meant is forcibly described in a private memorandum of a leading reformer, preserved by Mr. Gladstone among his papers on this subject. 'The existing corps of civil servants,' says the writer, 'do not like the new plan, because the introduction of well-educated, active men, will force them to bestir themselves, and because they cannot hope to get their own ill-educated sons appointed under the new system.

[1] *Academical Organisation.* By Mark Pattison, p. 24.

[2] The following speeches made by Mr. Gladstone on the Oxford bill were deemed by him of sufficient importance to be included in the projected edition of his collected speeches: On the introduction of the bill, March 19 (1854); on the second reading, April 7; during the committee stage, April 27, June 1, 22, 23, and July 27.

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*The old established political families habitually batten on the public patronage* — their sons legitimate and illegitimate, their relatives and dependents of every degree, are provided for by the score. Besides the adventuring disreputable class of members of parliament, who make God knows what use of the patronage, a large number of borough members are mainly dependent upon it for their seats. What, for instance, are the members to do who have been sent down by the patronage secretary to contest boroughs in the interest of the government, and who are pledged twenty deep to their constituents?'

The foreign office had undergone, some years before, a thorough reconstruction by Lord Palmerston, who, though very cool to constitutional reform, was assiduous and exacting in the forms of public business, not least so in the vital matter of a strong, plain, bold handwriting. Revision had been attempted in various departments before Mr. Gladstone went to the exchequer, and a spirit of improvement was in the air. Lowe, beginning his official career as one of the secretaries of the board of control, had procured the insertion in the India bill of 1853 of a provision throwing open the great service of India to competition for all British-born subjects, and he was a vigorous advocate of a general extension of the principle.[1] It was the conditions common to all the public establishments that called for revision, and the foundations for reform were laid in a report by Northcote and Sir Charles Trevelyan (November 1853), prepared for Mr. Gladstone at his request, recommending two propositions, so familiarised to us to-day as to seem like primordial elements of the British constitution. One was, that access to the public service should be through the door of a competitive examination; the other, that for conducting these examinations a central board should be constituted. The effect of such a change has been enormous not only on the efficiency of the service, but on the education of the country, and by a thousand indirect influences, raising and strengthening the social feeling for the immortal maxim that the career should be open to the talents. The lazy

[1] *Life of Lord Sherbrooke*, pp. 421–2.

doctrine that men are much of a muchness gave way to a higher respect for merit and to more effectual standards of competency.

The reform was not achieved without a battle. The whole case was argued by Mr. Gladstone in a letter to Lord John Russell of incomparable trenchancy and force, one of the best specimens of the writer at his best, and only not worth reproducing here, because the case has long been finished.[1] Lord John (Jan. 20) wrote to him curtly in reply, 'I hope no change will be made, and I certainly must protest against it.' In reply to even a second assault, he remained quite unconvinced. At present, he said, the Queen appointed the ministers, and the ministers the subordinates; in future the board of examiners would be in the place of the Queen. Our institutions would be as nearly republican as possible, and the new spirit of the public offices would not be loyalty but republicanism! As one of Lord John's kindred spirits declared, 'The more the civil service is recruited from the lower classes, the less will it be sought after by the higher, until at last the aristocracy will be altogether dissociated from the permanent civil service of the country.' How could the country go on with a democratic civil service by the side of an aristocratic legislature?[2] This was just the spirit that Mr. Gladstone loathed. To Graham he wrote (Jan. 3, 1854), 'I do not want any pledges as to details; what I seek is your countenance and favour in an endeavour to introduce to the cabinet a proposal that we should give our sanction to the principle that in every case where a satisfactory test of a defined and palpable nature can be furnished, the public service shall be laid open to personal merit. . . . This is *my* contribution to parliamentary reform.' On January 26 (1854) the cabinet was chiefly occupied by Mr. Gladstone's proposition, and after a long discussion his plan was adopted. When reformers more ardent than accurate insisted in later years that it was the aristocracy who kept patronage, Mr. Gladstone reminded the House, 'No cabinet could have been more aristocratically composed than that over which

[1] For an extract see Appendix.
[2] Romilly, quoted by Layard, June 15th, 1855.

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Lord Aberdeen presided. I myself was the only one of fifteen noblemen and gentlemen who composed it, who could not fairly be said to belong to that class.' Yet it was this cabinet that conceived and matured a plan for the surrender of all its patronage. There for the moment, in spite of all his vigour and resolution, the reform was arrested. Time did not change him. In November he wrote to Trevelyan: 'My own opinions are more and more in favour of the plan of competition. I do not mean that they can be more in its favour as a principle, than they were when I invited you and Northcote to write the report which has lit up the flame; but more and more do the incidental evils seem curable and the difficulties removable.' As the Crimean war went on, the usual cry for administrative reform was raised, and Mr. Gladstone never made a more terse, pithy, and incontrovertible speech than his defence for an open civil service in the summer of 1855.[1]

For this branch of reform, too, the inspiration had proceeded from Oxford. Two of the foremost champions of the change had been Temple — afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury — and Jowett. The latter was described by Mr. Gladstone to Graham as being 'as handy a workman as you shall readily find,' and in the beginning of 1855 he proposed to these two reformers that they should take the salaried office of examiners under the civil service scheme. Much of his confident expectation of good, he told them, was built upon their co-operation. In all his proceedings on this subject, Mr. Gladstone showed in strong light in how unique a degree he combined a profound democratic instinct with the spirit of good government; the instinct of popular equality along with the scientific spirit of the enlightened bureaucrat.

[1] He made three speeches on the subject at this period; June 15th and July 10th, 1855, and April 24th, 1856. The first was on Layard's motion for reform, which was rejected by 359 to 46.

# CHAPTER V

## WAR FINANCE — TAX OR LOAN

(*1854*)

THE expenses of a war are the moral check which it has pleased the Almighty to impose upon the ambition and lust of conquest, that are inherent in so many nations. There is pomp and circumstance, there is glory and excitement about war, which, notwithstanding the miseries it entails, invests it with charms in the eyes of the community, and tends to blind men to those evils to a fearful and dangerous degree. The necessity of meeting from year to year the expenditure which it entails is a salutary and wholesome check, making them feel what they are about, and making them measure the cost of the benefit upon which they may calculate. — GLADSTONE.



THE finance of 1854 offered nothing more original or ingenious than bluntly doubling the income tax (from seven pence to fourteen pence), and raising the duties on spirits, sugar, and malt. The draught was administered in two doses, first in a provisional budget for half a year (March 6), next in a completed scheme two months later. During the interval the chancellor of the exchequer was exposed to much criticism alike from city experts and plain men. The plans of 1853 had, in the main, proved a remarkable success, but they were not without weak points. Reductions in the duties of customs, excise, and stamps had all been followed by increase in their proceeds. But the succession duty brought in no more than a fraction of the estimated sum — the only time, Mr. Gladstone observes, in which he knew the excellent department concerned to have fallen into such an error. The proposal for conversion proved, under circumstances already described, to have no attraction for the fundholder. The operation on the South Sea stock was worse than a

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failure, for it made the exchequer, in order to pay off eight millions at par, raise a larger sum at three and a half per cent., and at three per cent. in a stock standing at 87.[1] All this brought loudish complaints from the money market. The men at the clubs talked of the discredit into which Gladstone had fallen as a financier, and even persons not unfriendly to him spoke of him as rash, obstinate, and injudicious. He was declared to have destroyed his prestige and overthrown his authority.[2]

This roused all the slumbering warrior in him, and when the time came (May 8), in a speech three and a half hours long, he threw his detractors into a depth of confusion that might have satisfied the Psalmist himself. Peremptorily he brushed aside the apology of his assailants for not challenging him by a direct vote of want of confidence, that such a vote would be awkward in a time of war. On the contrary, he said, a case so momentous as the case of war is the very reason why you should show boldly whether you have confidence in our management of your finances or not; if you disapprove, the sooner I know it the better. Then he dashed into a close and elaborate defence in detail, under all the heads of attack, — his manner of dealing with the unfunded debt, his abortive scheme of conversion, his mode of charging deficiency bills. This astonishing mass of dry and difficult matter was impressed in full significance upon the House, not only by the orator's own buoyant and energetic interest in the performance, but by the sense which he awoke in his hearers, that to exercise their attention and judgment upon the case before them was a binding debt imperatively due to themselves and to the country, by men owning the high responsibility of their station. This was the way in which he at all times strove to stir the self-respect of the House of Commons. Not sparing his critics a point or an argument, he drove his case clean home with a vigour that made it seem as if the study of Augustine and Dante and the Fathers were

[1] Northcote, *Financial Policy*, p. 242; Buxton, *Mr. Gladstone: A Study*, pp. 154–5.

[2] Greville, Part III. i. pp. 150, 151, 157.

after all the best training for an intimate and triumphant mastery of the proper amount of gold to be kept at the bank, the right interest on an exchequer bond and an exchequer bill, and all the arcana of the public accounts.[1] Even where their case had something in it, he showed that they had taken the wrong points. Nor did he leave out the spice of the sarcasm that the House loves. A peer had reproached him for the amount of his deficiency bills. This peer had once himself for four years been chancellor of the exchequer. 'My deficiency bills,' cried Mr. Gladstone, 'reached three millions and a half. How much were the bills of the chancellor whom this figure shocks? In his first year they were four millions and a half, in the second almost the same, in the third more than five and a quarter, in the fourth nearly five millions and a half.' Disraeli and others pretended that they had foreseen the failure of the conversion. Mr. Gladstone proved that, as matter of recorded fact, they had done nothing of the sort. 'This is the way in which mythical history arises. An event happens without attracting much notice; subsequently it excites interest; then people look back upon the time now passed, and see things not as they are or were, but through the haze of distance — they see them as they wish them to have been, and what they wish them to have been, they believe that they were.'

For this budget no genius, only courage, was needed; but Mr. Gladstone advanced in connection with it a doctrine that raised great questions, moral, political, and economic, and again illustrated that characteristic of his mind which always made some broad general principle a necessity of action. All through 1854, and in a sense very often since, parliament was agitated by Mr. Gladstone's bold proposition that the cost of war should be met by taxation at the time, and not by loans to be paid back by another generation. He did not advance his abstract doctrine without qualification. This, in truth, Mr. Gladstone hardly ever did, and

[1] Not many years before (1838), Talleyrand had surprised the French institute by a paper in which he passed a eulogy on strong theological studies; their influence on vigour as well as on finesse of mind; on the skilful ecclesiastical diplomatists that those studies had formed.

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it was one of the reasons why he acquired a bad name for sophistry and worse. Men fastened on the general principle, set out in all its breadth and with much emphasis; they overlooked the lurking qualification; and then were furiously provoked at having been taken in. 'I do not know,' he wrote some years later to Northcote, 'where you find that I laid down any general maxim that all war supplies were to be raised by taxes. . . . I said in my speech of May 8, revised for Hansard, it was the duty and policy of the country to make *in the first instance* a great effort from its own resources.' The discussions of the time, however, seem to have turned on the unqualified construction. While professing his veneration and respect for the memory of Pitt, he opened in all its breadth the question raised by Pitt's policy of loan, loan, loan. The economic answer is open to more dispute than he then appeared to suppose, but it was the political and moral reasons for meeting the demands of war by tax and not by loan that coloured his economic view. The passage in which he set forth the grounds for his opinion has become a classic place in parliamentary discussion, but it is only too likely for a long time to come to bear reproducing, and I have taken it as a motto for this chapter. His condemnation of loans, absolutely if not relatively, was emphatic. 'The system of raising funds necessary for wars by loan practises wholesale, systematic, and continual deception upon the people. The people do not really know what they are doing. The consequences are adjourned into a far future.' I may as well here complete or correct this language by a further quotation from the letter to Northcote to which I have already referred. He is writing in 1862 on Northcote's book on *Twenty Years of Finance*. 'I cannot refrain,' he says, 'from paying you a sincere compliment, first on the skill with which you have composed an eminently readable work on a dry subject; and secondly, on the tact founded in good feeling and the love of truth with which you have handled your materials throughout.' He then remarks on various points in the book, and among the rest on this: —

Allow me also to say that I think in your comparison of the effect of taxes and loans you have looked (p. 262) too much to the effect on labour at the moment. Capital and labour are in permanent competition for the division of the fruits of production. When in years of war say twenty millions annually are provided by loan say for three, five, or ten years, then two consequences follow.

1. An immense factitious stimulus is given to labour at the time — and thus much more labour is brought into the market.

2. When that stimulus is withdrawn an augmented quantity of labour is left to compete in the market with a greatly diminished quantity of capital.

Here is the story of the *misery* of great masses of the English people after 1815, or at the least a material part of that story.

I hold by the doctrine that war loans are in many ways a great evil: but I admit their necessity, and in fact the budget of 1855 was handed over by me to Sir George Lewis, and underwent in his hands little alteration unless such as, with the growing demands of the war, I should myself have had to make in it, *i.e.* some, not very considerable, enlargement.

Writing a second letter to Northcote a few days later (August 11, 1862), he goes a little deeper into the subject: —

The general question of loans *v.* taxes for war purposes is one of the utmost interest, but one that I have never seen worked out in print. But assuming as *data* the established principles of our financial system, and by no means denying the necessity of loans, I have not the least doubt that it is for the interest of labour, as opposed to capital, that as large a share as possible of war expenditure should be defrayed from taxes. When war breaks out the wages of labour on the whole have a tendency to rise, and the labour of the country is well able to bear some augmentation of taxes. The sums added to the public expenditure are likely at the outset, and for some time, to be larger than the sums withdrawn from commerce. When war ends, on the contrary, a great mass of persons are dismissed from public employment, and, flooding the labour market, reduce the rate of wages. But again, when war comes, it is quite certain that a large share of the war taxes will be laid upon property: and that, in war, property will bear a

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larger share of our total taxation than in peace. From this it seems to follow at once that, up to the point at which endurance is practicable, payment by war-taxes rather than by taxes in peace is for the interest of the people at large. I am not one of those who think that our system of taxation, taken as a whole, is an over-liberal one towards them. These observations are mere contributions to a discussion, and by no means pretend to dispose of the question.

II

In the autumn he had a sharp tussle with the Bank of England, and displayed a toughness, stiffness, and sustained anger that greatly astonished Threadneedle Street. In the spring he had introduced a change in the mode of issuing deficiency bills, limiting the quarterly amount to such a sum as would cover the maximum of dividends payable, as known by long experience to be called for. The Bank held this to be illegal; claimed the whole amount required, along with balances actually in hand, to cover the entire amount payable; and asked him to take the opinion of the law officers. The lawyers backed the chancellor of the exchequer. Then the Bank took an opinion of their own; their counsel (Kelly and Palmer) advised that the attorney and solicitor were wrong; and recommended the Bank to bring their grievance before the prime minister. Mr. Gladstone was righteously incensed at this refusal to abide by an opinion invited by the Bank itself, and by which if it had been adverse he would himself have been bound. 'And then,' said Bethell, urging Mr. Gladstone to stand to his guns, 'its counsel call the Bank a trustee for the public! Proh pudor! What stuff lawyers will talk. But 'tis their vocation.' Mr. Gladstone's letters were often prolix, but nobody could be more terse and direct when occasion moved him, and the proceedings of the lawyers with their high Bank views and the equivocal faith of the directors in bringing fresh lawyers into the case at all provoked more than one stern and brief epistle. The governor, who was his private friend, winced. 'I do not study diplomacy in letters of this kind,' Mr. Gladstone replied, 'and there is no sort of doubt that I am very

angry about the matter of the opinion; but affected and sarcastic politeness is an instrument which in writing to you I should think it the worst taste and the worst feeling to employ. I admire the old fashion according to which in English pugilism (which, however, I do not admire) the combatants shook hands before they fought; only I think much time ought not to be spent upon such salutations when there is other work to do.'

In a letter to his wife seven years later, Mr. Gladstone says of this dispute, 'Mr. Arbuthnot told me to-day an observation of Sir George Lewis's when at the exchequer here. Speaking of my controversy with the Bank in 1854, he said, "It is a pity Gladstone puts so much heat, so much irritability into business. Now I am as cool as a fish."' The worst of being as cool as a fish is that you never get great things done, you effect no improvements, and you carry no reforms, against the lethargy or selfishness of men and the tyranny of old custom.[1]

Now also his attention was engaged by the controversies on currency that thrive so lustily in the atmosphere of the Bank Charter Act, and, after much discussion with authorities both in Lombard Street and at the treasury, without committal he sketched out at least one shadow of a project of his own. He knew, however, that any great measure must be undertaken by a finance minister with a clear position and strong hands, and he told Graham that even if he saw his way distinctly to a plan, he did not feel individually strong enough for the attempt. Nor was there time. To reconstitute the Savings Bank finance, to place the chancery and some other accounts on a right basis, and to readjust the banking relations properly so-called between the Bank and the state, would be even more than a fair share of financial work for the session. Before the year was over he passed a bill, for which he had laid before the cabinet elaborate argumentative supports, removing a number of objections to the then existing system of dealing with the funds drawn from Savings Banks.[2]

[1] See Appendix.

[2] 17 and 18 Vict., c. 50.

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The year closed with an incident that created a considerable stir, and might by misadventure have become memorable. What has been truly called a warm and prolonged dispute[1] arose out of Mr. Gladstone's removal of a certain official from his post in the department of woods and forests. As Lord Aberdeen told the Queen that he could not easily make the case intelligible, it is not likely that I should succeed any better, and we may as well leave the thick dust undisturbed. Enough to say that Lord John Russell thought the dismissal harsh; that Mr. Gladstone stood his ground against either the reversal of what he had done, or any proceedings in parliament that might look like contrition, but was willing to submit the points to the decision of colleagues; that Lord John would submit no point to colleagues 'affecting his personal honour' — to such degrees of heat can the quicksilver mount even in a cabinet thermometer. If such quarrels of the great are painful, there is some compensation in the firmness, patience, and benignity with which a man like Lord Aberdeen strove to appease them. Some of his colleagues actually thought that Lord John would make this paltry affair a plea for resigning, while others suspected that he might find a better excuse in the revival of convocation. As it happened, a graver occasion offered itself.

[1] Walpole's *Russell*, ii. p. 243 *n.*

# CHAPTER VI

## CRISIS OF 1855 AND BREAK-UP OF THE PEELITES

(*1855*)

PARTY has no doubt its evils; but all the evils of party put together would be scarcely a grain in the balance, when compared with the dissolution of honourable friendships, the pursuit of selfish ends, the want of concert in council, the absence of a settled policy in foreign affairs, the corruption of certain statesmen, the caprices of an intriguing court, which the extinction of party connection has brought and would bring again upon this country. — EARL RUSSELL.[1]



THE administrative miscarriages of the war in the Crimea during the winter of 1854–5 destroyed the coalition government.[2] When parliament assembled on January 23, 1855, Mr. Roebuck on the first night of the session gave notice of a motion for a committee of inquiry. Lord John Russell attended to the formal business, and when the House was up went home accompanied by Sir Charles Wood. Nothing of consequence passed between the two colleagues, and no word was said to Wood in the direction of withdrawal. The same evening as the prime minister was sitting in his drawing-room, a red box was brought in to him by his son, containing Lord John Russell's resignation. He was as much amazed as Lord Newcastle, smoking his evening pipe of tobacco in his coach, was amazed by the news that the battle of Marston Moor had begun. Nothing has come to light since to set aside the severe judgment pronounced upon this proceeding by the universal opinion of contemporaries, including Lord John's own closest political allies. That a minister should run away from a hostile motion upon affairs for which responsi-

[1] On Bute's plan of superseding party by prerogative, in the introduction to vol. iii. of the Bedford *Correspondence*.

[2] See Appendix.

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bility was collective, and this without a word of consultation with a single colleague, is a transaction happily without a precedent in the history of modern English cabinets.[1] It opened an intricate and unexpected chapter of affairs.

The ministerial crisis of 1855 was unusually prolonged ; it was interesting as a drama of character and motive; it marked a decisive stage in the evolution of party, and it was one of the turning points in the career of the subject of this biography. Fortunately for us, Mr. Gladstone has told in his own way the whole story of what he calls this 'sharp and difficult passage in public affairs,' and he might have added that it was a sharp passage in his own life. His narrative, with the omission of some details now dead and indifferent, and of a certain number of repetitions, is the basis of this chapter.

## I

On the day following Lord John's letter the cabinet met, and the prime minister told them that at first he thought it meant the break-up of the government, but on further consideration he thought they should hold on, if it could be done with honour and utility. Newcastle suggested his own resignation, and the substitution of Lord Palmerston in his place. Palmerston agreed that the country, rightly or wrongly, wished to see him at the war office, but he was ready to do whatever his colleagues thought best. The whigs thought resignation necessary. Mr. Gladstone thought otherwise, and scouted the suggestion that as Newcastle was willing to resign, Lord John might come back. Lord John himself actually sent a sort of message to know whether he should attend the cabinet. In the end Lord Aberdeen carried all their resignations to the Queen. These she declined to accept, and she 'urged with the greatest eagerness that the decision should be reconsidered.' It is hard at this distance of time to understand how any cabinet under national circumstances of such gravity could have thought of the ignominy of taking to flight from a motion of censure, whatever a single colleague like Lord John

[1] See Chap. x. of Lord Stanmore's *Earl of Aberdeen.*

Russell might deem honourable. On pressure from the Queen, the whigs in the government, Lord John notwithstanding, agreed to stand fire. Mr. Gladstone proceeds: —

Lord John's explanation, which was very untrue in its general effect, though I believe kindly conceived in feeling as well as tempered with some grains of policy and a contemplation of another possible premiership, carried the House with him, as Herbert observed while he was speaking. Palmerston's reply to him was wretched. It produced in the House (that is, in so much of the House as would otherwise have been favourable), a flatness and deadness of spirit towards the government which was indescribable; and Charles Wood with a marked expression of face said while it was going on, 'And this is to be our leader!' I was myself so painfully full of the scene, that when Palmerston himself sat down I was on the very point of saying to him unconsciously, 'Can anything more be said?' But no one would rise in the adverse sense, and therefore there was no opening for a minister. Palmerston [now become leader in the Commons] had written to ask me to follow Lord John on account of his being a *party*. But it was justly thought in the cabinet that there were good reasons against my taking this part upon me, and so the arrangement was changed.

Roebuck brought forward his motion. Mr. Gladstone resisted it on behalf of the government with immense argumentative force, and he put the point against Lord John which explains the word 'untrue' in the passage just quoted, namely, that though he desired in November the substitution of Palmerston for Newcastle as war minister, he had given it up in December, and yet this vital fact was omitted.[1] It was not for the government, he said, either to attempt to make terms with the House by reconstruction of a cabinet, or to shrink from any judgment of the House upon their acts. If they had so shrunk, he exclaimed, this is the sort of epitaph that he would expect to have written over their remains: 'Here lie the dishonoured ashes of a ministry that found England in peace and left in it war, that was content

[1] 'This *suppressio veri* is shocking, and one of the very worst things he ever did.' — *Greville*, III. i. p. 232.

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to enjoy the emoluments of office and to wield the sceptre of power, so long as no man had the courage to question their existence: they saw the storm gathering over the country; they heard the agonising accounts that were almost daily received of the sick and wounded in the East. These things did not move them, but so soon as a member of opposition raised his hand to point the thunderbolt, they became conscience-stricken into a sense of guilt, and hoping to escape punishment, they ran away from duty.' Such would be their epitaph. Of the proposed inquiry itself, — an inquiry into the conduct of generals and troops actually in the field, and fighting by the side of, and in concert with, foreign allies, he observed — 'Your inquiry will never take place as a real inquiry; or, if it did, it would lead to nothing but confusion and disturbance, increased disasters, shame at home and weakness abroad; it would convey no consolation to those whom you seek to aid, but it would carry malignant joy to the hearts of the enemies of England; and, for my part, I shall ever rejoice, if this motion is carried to-night, that my own last words as a member of the cabinet of the Earl of Aberdeen have been words of solemn and earnest protest against a proceeding which has no foundation either in the constitution or in the practice of preceding parliaments; which is useless and mischievous for the purpose which it appears to contemplate; and which, in my judgment, is full of danger to the power, dignity, and usefulness of the Commons of England.' A journalistic observer, while deploring the speaker's adherence to 'the dark dogmatisms of medieval religionists,' admits that he had never heard so fine a speech. The language, he says, was devoid of redundance. The attitude was calm. Mr. Gladstone seemed to feel that he rested upon the magnitude of the argument, and had no need of the assistance of bodily vehemence of manner. His voice was clear, distinct, and flexible, without monotony. It was minute dissection without bitterness or ill-humoured innuendo. He sat down amid immense applause from hearers admiring but unconvinced. Mr. Gladstone himself records of this speech: 'Hard and heavy work,

especially as to the cases of three persons: Lord John Russell, Duke of Newcastle, and Lord Raglan.' Ministers were beaten (January 29) by 325 to 148, and they resigned.

*Jan.* 30, 1855. — Cabinet 1–2. We exchanged friendly adieus. Dined with the Herberts. This was a day of personal lightheartedness, but the problem for the nation is no small one.

The Queen sent for Lord Derby, and he made an attempt to form a government. Without aid from the conservative wing of the fallen ministry there was no hope, and his first step (Jan. 31) was to call on Lord Palmerston, with an earnest request for his support, and with a hope that he would persuade Mr. Gladstone and Sidney Herbert to rejoin their old political connection; with the intimation moreover that Mr. Disraeli, with a self-abnegation that did him the highest credit, was willing to waive in Lord Palmerston's favour his own claim to the leadership of the House of Commons. Palmerston was to be president of the council, and Ellenborough minister of war. In this conversation Lord Palmerston made no objection on any political grounds, or on account of any contemplated measures; he found no fault with the position intended for himself, or for others with whom he would be associated. Lord Derby supposed that all would depend on the concurrence of Mr. Gladstone and Herbert. He left Cambridge House at half-past two in the afternoon, and at half-past nine in the evening he received a note from Lord Palmerston declining. Three hours later he heard from Mr. Gladstone, who declined also. The proceedings of this eventful day, between two in the afternoon and midnight, whatever may have been the play of motive and calculation in the innermost minds of all or any of the actors, were practically to go a long way, though by no means the whole way, as we shall see, towards making Mr. Gladstone's severance from the conservative party definitive.

*Jan.* 31. — Lord Palmerston came to see me between three and four, with a proposal from Lord Derby that he and I, with S. Herbert should take office under him; Palmerston to be president of the council and lead the House of Commons. Not finding me when he called before, he had gone to S. Herbert, who seemed

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to be disinclined. I inquired (1) whether Derby mentioned Graham? (2) Whether he had told Lord Palmerston if his persevering with the commission he had received would depend on the answer to this proposal. (3) How he was himself inclined. He answered the two first questions in the negative, and said as to the third, though not keenly, that he felt disinclined, but that if he refused it would be attributed to his contemplating another result, which other result he considered would be agreeable to the country. I then argued strongly with him that though he might form a government, and though if he formed it, he would certainly start it amidst immense clapping of hands, yet he could not have any reasonable prospect of stable parliamentary support; on the one hand would stand Derby with his phalanx, on the other Lord J. Russell, of necessity a centre and nucleus of discontent, and between these two there would and could be no room for a parliamentary majority such as would uphold his government. He argued only rather faintly the other way, and seemed rather to come to my way of thinking.

I said that even if the proposition were entertained, there would be much to consider; that I thought it clear, whatever else was doubtful, that we could not join without him, for in his absence the wound would not heal kindly again, that I could not act without Lord Aberdeen's approval, nor should I willingly separate myself from Graham; that if we joined, we must join in force. But I was disposed to wish that if all details could be arranged, we should join in that manner rather than that Derby should give up the commission, though I thought the best thing of all would be Derby forming a ministry of his own men, provided only he could get a good or fair foreign secretary instead of Clarendon, who in any case would be an immense loss. . . .

I went off to speak to Lord Aberdeen, and Palmerston went to speak to Clarendon, with respect to whom he had told Derby that he could hardly enter any government which had not Clarendon at the foreign office. When we reassembled, I asked Lord Palmerston whether he had made up his mind for himself independently of us, inasmuch as I thought that if he had, that was enough to close the whole question? He answered, Yes; that he should tell Derby he did not think he could render him useful

service in his administration. He then left. It was perhaps 6.30. Herbert and I sat down to write, but thought it well to send off nothing till after dinner, and we went to Grillion's where we had a small but merry party. Herbert even beyond himself amusing. At night we went to Lord Aberdeen's and Graham's, and so my letter came through some slight emendations to the form in which it went.[1] I had doubts in my mind whether Derby had even intended to propose to Herbert and me *except* in conjunction with Palmerston, though I had no doubt that without Palmerston it would not do; and I framed my letter so as not to assume that I had an independent proposal, but to make my refusal a part of his.

*Feb.* 2. — I yesterday also called on Lord Palmerston and read him my letter to Lord Derby. He said: 'Nothing can be better.'

Lord Derby knew that, though he had the country gentlemen behind him, his own political friends, with the notable and only half-welcome exception of Mr. Disraeli, were too far below mediocrity in either capacity or experience to face so angry and dangerous a crisis. Accordingly he gave up the task. Many years after, Mr. Gladstone recorded his opinion that here Lord Derby missed his one real chance of playing a high historic part. 'To a Derby government,' he said, 'now that the party had been *drubbed* out of protection, I did not in principle object; for old ties were with me more operatively strong than new opinions, and I think that Lord Derby's error in not forming an administration was palpable and even gross. Such, it has appeared, was the opinion of Disraeli.[2] Lord Derby had many fine qualities; but strong parliamentary courage was not among them. When Lord Palmerston (probably with a sagacious discernment of the immediate future) declined, he made no separate offer to the Peelites. Had Lord Derby gone on, he would have been supported by the country, then absorbed in the consideration of the war. None of the three occa-

[1] At Lord Aberdeen's the question seems to have been discussed on the assumption that the offer to Mr. Gladstone and Herbert was meant to be independent of Palmerston's acceptance or refusal, and the impression there was that Mr. Gladstone had been not wholly disinclined to consider the offer.

[2] Malmesbury's *Memoirs of an Ex-Minister*, i. pp. 8, 37.

sions when he took office offered him so fine an opportunity as this; but he missed it.'

On the previous day, Mr. Gladstone records: 'Saw Mr. Disraeli in the House of Lords and put out my hand, which was very kindly accepted.' To nobody was the hour fraught with more bitter mortification than to Mr. Disraeli, who beheld a golden chance of bringing a consolidated party into the possession of real power flung away.

II

Next, at the Queen's request, soundings in the whig and Peelite waters were undertaken by Lord Lansdowne, and he sent for Mr. Gladstone, with a result that to the latter was ever after matter of regret.

*Feb.* 2.— In consequence of a communication from Lord Lansdowne, I went to him in the forenoon and found him just returned from Windsor. He trusted I should not mind speaking freely to him, and I engaged to do it, only premising that in so crude and dark a state of facts, it was impossible to go beyond first impressions. We then conversed on various combinations, as (1) Lord J. Russell, premier, (2) Lord Palmerston, (3) Lord Clarendon, (4) Lord Lansdowne himself. Of the first I doubted whether, in the present state of feeling, he could get a ministry on its legs. In answer to a question from him, I added that I thought, viewing my relations to Lord Aberdeen and to Newcastle, and *his* to them also, the public feeling would be offended, and it would not be for the public interest, if I were to form part of his government (*i.e.* Russell's). Of the second I said that it appeared to me Lord Palmerston could not obtain a party majority. Aloof from him would stand on the one hand Derby and his party, on the other Lord J. Russell, who I took it for granted would never serve under him. Whatever the impression made by Russell's recent conduct, yet his high personal character and station, forty years career, one-half of it in the leadership of his party, and the close connection of his name with all the great legislative changes of the period, must ever render him a power in the state, and render it impossible for a government depending on the liberal party to live independently of him. I also hinted at injurious effects which

the substitution of Palmerston for Lord Aberdeen would produce on foreign Powers at this critical moment, but dwelt chiefly on the impossibility of his having a majority. In this Lord Lansdowne seemed to agree.

Lastly, I said that if Lord Lansdowne himself could venture to risk his health and strength by taking the government, this would be the best arrangement. My opinion was that at this crisis Derby, if he could have formed an administration, would have had advantages with regard to the absorbing questions of the war and of a peace to follow it, such as no other combination could possess. Failing this, I wished for a homogeneous whig government. The best form of it would be under him. He said he might dare it provisionally, if he could see his way to a permanent arrangement at the end of a short term; but he could see nothing of the sort at present.

*An autobiographic note of 1897 gives a further detail of moment:* — He asked whether I would continue to hold my office as chancellor of the exchequer in the event of his persevering. He said that if I gave an affirmative reply he would persevere with the commission, and I think intimated that except on this condition he would not. I said that the working of the coalition since its formation in December 1852 had been to me entirely satisfactory, but that I was not prepared to co-operate in its continuation under any other head than Lord Aberdeen. I think that though perfectly satisfied to be in a Peelite government which had whigs or radicals in it, I was not ready to be in a whig government which had Peelites in it. It took a long time, with my slow-moving and tenacious character, for the Ethiopian to change his skin.

In the paper that I have already mentioned, as recording what, when all was near an end, he took to be some of the errors of his life, Mr. Gladstone names as one of those errors this refusal in 1855 to join Lord Lansdowne. 'I can hardly suppose,' he says, more than forty years after that time, 'that the eventual failure of the Queen's overture to Lord Lansdowne was due to my refusal; but that refusal undoubtedly constituted one of his difficulties and helped to bring about the result. I have always looked back upon it with pain as a serious and even gross error of judgment. It was, I think,

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injurious to the public, if it contributed to the substitution as prime minister of Lord Palmerston for Lord Lansdowne, — a personage of greater dignity, and I think a higher level of political principle. There was no defect in Lord Lansdowne sufficient to warrant my refusal. He would not have been a strong or very active prime minister; but the question of the day was the conduct of the war, and I had no right to take exception to him as a head in connection with this subject. His attitude in domestic policy was the same as Palmerston's, but I think he had a more unprejudiced and liberal mind, though less of motive force in certain directions.'

III

The next day Mr. Gladstone called on Lord Aberdeen, who for the first time let drop a sort of opinion as to their duties in the crisis on one point; hithertofore he had restrained himself. He said, 'Certainly the most natural thing under the circumstances, if it could have been brought about in a satisfactory form, would have been that you should have joined Derby.' On returning home, Mr. Gladstone received an important visitor and a fruitless visit.

At half-past two to-day Lord John Russell was announced; and sat till three — his hat shaking in his hand. A communication had reached him late last night from the Queen, charging him with the formation of a government, and he had thought it his duty to make the endeavour. I repeated to him what I had urged on Lord Lansdowne, that a coalition with advantages has also weaknesses of its own, that the late coalition was I thought fully justified by the circumstances under which it took place, but at this juncture it had broken down. This being so, I thought what is called a homogeneous government would be best for the public, and most likely to command approval; that Derby if he could get a good foreign minister would have had immense advantages with respect to the great questions of war and peace. Lord John agreed as to Derby; thought that every one must have supported him, and that he ought to have persevered.

I held to my point, adding that I did not think Lord Aberdeen and Lord Palmerston represented opposite principles,

but rather different forms of the same principles connected with different habits and temperaments. He said that Lord Palmerston had agreed to lead the House of Commons for him, he going as first minister to the Lords; but he did not mention any other alteration. Upon the whole his tone was low and doubtful. He asked whether my answer was to be considered as given, or whether I would take time. But I said as there was no probability that my ideas would be modified by reflection, it would not be fair to him to ask any delay.

With the single exception of Lord Palmerston, none of his colleagues would have anything to do with Lord John, some even declining to go to see him. Wood came to Mr. Gladstone, evidently in the sense of the Palmerston premiership. He declared that Aberdeen was impossible, to which, says Mr. Gladstone, 'I greatly demurred.'

IV

Thus the two regular party leaders had failed; Lord Aberdeen, the coalition leader, was almost universally known to be out of the question; the public was loudly clamouring for Lord Palmerston. A Palmerston ministry was now seen to be inevitable. Were the Peelites, then, having refused Lord Derby, having refused Lord John, having told Lord Lansdowne that he had better form a system of homogeneous whigs, now finally to refuse Lord Palmerston, on no better ground than that they could not have Lord Aberdeen, whom nobody save themselves would consent on any terms to have? To propound such a question was to answer it. Lord Aberdeen himself, with admirable freedom from egotism, pressed the point that in addition to the argument of public necessity, they owed much to their late whig colleagues, 'who behaved so nobly and so generously towards us after Lord John's resignation.'

'I have heard club talk and society talk,' wrote an adherent to Mr. Gladstone late one night (February 4), 'and I am sure that in the main any government containing good names in the cabinet, provided Lord John is not in it, will obtain general support. Lord Clarendon is universally, or nearly so, looked

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on as essential. Next to him, I think you are considered of vital importance in your present office. After all, rightly or wrongly, Lord Palmerston is master of the situation in the country; he is looked upon as the man. If the country sees you and Sidney Herbert holding aloof from him, it will be said the Peelites are selfish intriguers.' The same evening, another correspondent said to Mr. Gladstone: 'Two or three people have come in since eleven o'clock with the news of Brooks's and the Reform. Exultation prevails there, and the certainty of Palmerston's success to-morrow. There is a sort of rumour prevalent that Lord Palmerston may seek Lord J. Russell's aid. . . . This would, of course, negative all idea of your joining in the concern. Otherwise a refusal would be set down as sheer impracticability, or else the selfish ambition of a clique which could not stand alone, and should no longer attempt to do so. If the refusal to join Palmerston is to be a going over to the other side, and a definite junction within a brief space, that is clear and intelligible. But a refusal to join Lord Palmerston and yet holding out to him a promise of support, is a half-measure which no one will understand, and which, I own, I cannot see the grounds to defend.'

We shall now find how after long and strenuous dubitation, the Peelite leaders refused to join on the fifth of February, and then on the sixth they joined. Unpromising from the very first cabinet, the junction was destined to a swift and sudden end. Here is the story told by one of the two leading actors.

*Sunday, Feb.* 4. — Herbert came to me soon after I left him, and told me Palmerston had at last got the commission. He considered that this disposed of Lord Lansdowne; and seemed himself to be disposed to join. He said *we* must take care what we were about, and that we should be looked upon by the country as too nice if we declined to join Palmerston; who he believed (and in this I inclined to agree), would probably form a government. He argued that Lord Aberdeen was out of the question; that the vote of Monday night was against him; that the country would not stand him.

No new coalition ought to be formed, I said, without a prospect

of stability; and joining Lord Palmerston's cabinet would be a new coalition. He said he rather applied that phrase to a junction with Derby. I quite agreed we could not join Derby except under conditions which might not be realised; but if we *did* it, it would be a reunion, not a coalition. In coalition the separate existence is retained. I referred to the great instances of change of party in our time; Palmerston himself, and Stanley with Graham. But these took place when parties were divided by great questions of principle; there were none such now, and no one could say that the two sides of the House were divided by anything more than this, that one was rather more stationary, the other more movable. He said, 'True, the differences are on the back benches.'

I said I had now for two years been holding my mind in suspense upon the question I used to debate with Newcastle, who used to argue that we should grow into the natural leaders of the liberal party. I said, it is now plain this will not be; we get on very well with the independent liberals, but the whigs stand as an opaque body between us and them, and moreover, there they will stand and ought to stand.

Lord Palmerston came a little after two, and remained perhaps an hour. Lord Lansdowne had promised to join him if he formed an administration on a basis sufficiently broad. He wished me to retain my office; and dwelt on the satisfactory nature of my relations with the liberal party. He argued that Lord Aberdeen was excluded by the vote on Monday night; and that there was now no other government in view. My argument was adverse, though without going to a positive conclusion. I referred to my conversation of Wednesday, Jan. 31, in favour of a homogeneous government at this juncture.

At half-past eleven I went to Lord Aberdeen's and stayed about an hour. His being in the Palmerston cabinet which had been proposed, was, he said, out of the question; but his *velleities* seemed to lean rather to *our* joining, which surprised me. He was afraid of the position we should occupy in the public eye if we declined. . . .

*Feb.* 5. — The most irksome and painful of the days; beginning with many hours of anxious consultation to the best of our power, and ending amidst a storm of disapproval almost

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unanimous, not only from the generality, but from our own immediate political friends.

At 10.30 I went to Sir James Graham, who is still in bed, and told him the point to which by hard struggles I had come. The case with me was briefly this. I was ready to make the sacrifice of personal feeling; ready to see him (Lord Aberdeen) expelled from the premiership by a censure equally applicable to myself, and yet to remain in my office; ready to overlook not merely the inferior fitness, but the real and manifest unfitness, of Palmerston for that office; ready to enter upon a new venture with him, although in my opinion without any reasonable prospect of parliamentary support, such as is absolutely necessary for the credit and stability of a government — upon the one sole and all-embracing ground that the prosecution of the war with vigour, and the prosecution of it to and for peace, was now the question of the day to which every other must give way. But then it was absolutely necessary that if we joined a cabinet after our overlooking all this and more, it should be a cabinet in which confidence should be placed with reference to war and peace. Was the Aberdeen cabinet without Lord Aberdeen one in which I could place confidence? I answer, No. He was vital to it; his love of peace was necessary to its right and steady pursuit of that great end; if, then, *he* could belong to a Palmerston cabinet, I might; but without him I could not.

In all this, Sir J. Graham concurred. Herbert came full of doubts and fears, but on the whole adopted the same conclusion. Lord Aberdeen sent to say he would not come, but I wrote to beg him, and he appeared. On hearing how we stood, he said his remaining in the cabinet was quite out of the question; and that he had told Palmerston so yesterday when he glanced at it. But he thought we should incur great blame if we did not; which, indeed, was plainly beyond all dispute.

At length, when I had written and read aloud the rough draft of an answer, Lord Aberdeen said he must strongly advise our joining. I said to him, 'Lord Aberdeen, when we have joined the Palmerston cabinet, you standing aloof from it, will you rise in your place in the House of Lords and say that you give that cabinet your confidence with regard to the question of war and

peace?' He replied, 'I will express my hope that it will do right, but not my confidence, which is a different thing.' 'Certainly,' I answered, 'and that which you have now said is my justification. The unswerving honesty of your mind has saved us. Ninety-nine men out of a hundred in your position at the moment would have said, "Oh yes, I shall express my confidence." But you would not deviate an inch to the right or to the left.'

Herbert and I went to my house and despatched our answers. Now began the storm. Granville met us driving to Newcastle. Sorry beyond expression; he almost looked displeased, which for him is much. *Newcastle:* I incline to think you are wrong. *Canning:* My impression is you are wrong. Various letters streaming in, all portending condemnation and disaster. Herbert became more and more uneasy.

*Feb.* 6.—The last day I hope of these tangled records; in which we have seen, to say nothing of the lesser sacrifice, one more noble victim struck down, and we are set to feast over the remains. The thing is bad and the mode worse.

Arthur Gordon came early in the day with a most urgent letter from Lord Aberdeen addressed virtually to us, and urging us to join. He had seen both Palmerston and Clarendon, and derived much satisfaction from what they said. We met at the admiralty at twelve, where Graham lay much knocked up with the fatigue and anxiety of yesterday. I read to him and Lord Aberdeen Palmerston's letter of to-day to me. Herbert came in and made arguments in his sense. I told him I was at the point of yesterday, and was immovable by considerations of the class he urged. *The only security worth having lies in men;* the man is Lord Aberdeen; moral union and association with him must continue, and must be publicly known to continue. I therefore repeated my question to Lord Aberdeen, whether he would in his place as a peer declare, if we joined the cabinet, that it had his confidence with reference to war and peace? He said, much moved, that he felt the weight of the responsibility, but that after the explanation and assurances he had received, he would. He was even more moved when Graham said that though the leaning of his judgment was adverse, he would place himself absolutely

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in the hands of Lord Aberdeen. To Herbert, of course, it was a simple release from a difficulty. Palmerston had told Cardwell, 'Gladstone feels a difficulty first infused into him by Graham; Argyll and Herbert have made up their minds to do what Gladstone does.' Newcastle joined us, and was in Herbert's sense. I repeated again that Lord Aberdeen's declaration of confidence enabled me to see my way to joining. . . .

I went to Lord Aberdeen in his official room after his return from Palmerston. It was only when I left that room to-day that I began to realise the pang of parting. There he stood, struck down from his eminence by a vote that did not dare to avow its own purpose, and for his wisdom and virtue; there he stood endeavouring to cure the ill consequences to the public of the wrong inflicted upon himself, and as to the point immediately within reach successful in the endeavour. I ventured, however, to tell him that I hoped our conduct and reliance on him would tend to his eminence and honour, and said, 'You are not to be of the cabinet, but you are to be its tutelary deity.'

I had a message from Palmerston that he would answer me, but at night I went up to him.

## V

The rush of events was now somewhat slackened. Lord John called on Graham, and complained of the Peelites for having selfishly sought too many offices, alluding to what Canning had done, and imputing the same to Cardwell. He also thought they had made a great mistake in joining Palmerston. He seemed sore about Mr. Gladstone, and told Graham that Christopher, a stout tory, had said that if Gladstone joined Derby, a hundred of the party would withdraw their allegiance. At the party meeting on Feb. 21, Lord Derby was received with loud cries of 'No Puseyites; No papists,' and was much reprehended for asking Gladstone and Graham to join.

'I ought to have mentioned before,' Mr. Gladstone writes here, 'that, during our conferences at the admiralty, Lord Aberdeen expressed great compunction for having allowed the country to be dragged without adequate cause into the

war. So long as he lived, he said with his own depth and force, it would be a weight upon his conscience. He had held similar language to me lately at Argyll House; but when I asked him at what point *after* the fleet went to Besika Bay it would have been possible to stop short, he alluded to the *sommation*, which we were encouraged however, as he added, by Austria to send; and thought *this* was the false step. Yet he did not seem quite firm in the opinion.'

Then came the first cabinet (Feb. 10). It did not relieve the gloom of Mr. Gladstone's impressions. He found it more 'acephalous' than ever; 'less order; less unity of purpose.' The question of the Roebuck committee was raised, on which he said he thought the House would give it up, if government would promise an investigation under the authority of the crown. The fatal subject came up again three days later. Palmerston said it was plain from the feeling in the House the night before, that they were set upon it; if they could secure a fair committee, he was disposed to let the inquiry go forward. On this rock the ship struck. One minister said they could not resign in consequence of the appointment of the committee, because it stood affirmed by a large majority when they took office in the reconstructed cabinet. Mr. Gladstone says he 'argued with vehemence upon the breach of duty which it would involve on our part towards those holding responsible commands in the Crimea, if we without ourselves condemning them were to allow them to be brought before another tribunal like a select committee.'

Dining the same evening at the palace, Mr. Gladstone had a conversation on the subject both with the Queen and Prince Albert. 'The latter compared this appointment of a committee to the proceedings of the Convention of France; but still seemed to wish that the government should submit rather than retire. The Queen spoke openly in that sense, and trusted that she should not be given over into the hands of those "who are the least fit to govern." Without any positive and final declaration, I intimated to each that I did not think I could bring my mind to acquiesce in the prop-

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osition for an inquiry by a select committee into the state of the army in the Crimea.'

Time did not remove difficulties. Mr. Gladstone and Graham fought with extreme tenacity, and the first of them with an ingenuity for which the situation gave boundless scope. To the argument that they accepted office on reconstruction with the decision of the House for a committee staring them in the face, he replied: 'Before we were *out*, we were *in*. Why did we go out? Because of that very decision by the House of Commons. Our language was: The appointment of such a committee is incompatible with the functions of the executive, therefore it is a censure on the executive; therefore we resign! But it is not a whit *more* compatible with the functions of the executive now than it was then; therefore it is not one whit less a censure; and the question arises, (1) whether any government ought to allow its (now) principal duty to be delegated to a committee or other body, especially to one not under the control of the crown? (2) whether *that* government ought to allow it, the members of which (except one) have already resigned rather than allow it? In what way can the first resignation be justified on grounds which do not require a second?' He dwelt mainly on these two points — That the proposed transfer of the functions of the executive to a select committee of the House of Commons, with respect to an army in the face of the enemy and operating by the side of our French allies, and the recognition of this transfer by the executive government, was an evil greater than any that could arise from a total or partial resignation. Second, that it was clear that they did not, as things stood, possess the confidence of a majority of the House. 'I said that the committee was itself a censure on the government. They had a right to believe that parliament would not inflict this committee on a government which had its confidence. I also,' he says, 'recited my having ascertained from Palmerston (upon this recital we were agreed) on the 6th, before our decision was declared, his intention to oppose the committee. . . .'

Graham did not feel disposed to govern without the confidence of the House of Commons, or to be responsible

for the granting of a committee which the cabinet had unanimously felt to be unprecedented, unconstitutional, and dangerous. Lord Palmerston met all this by a strong practical clincher. He said that the House of Commons was becoming unruly from the doubts that had gone abroad as to the intentions of the government with respect to the committee; that the House was determined to have it; that if they opposed it they should be beaten by an overwhelming majority; to dissolve upon it would be ruinous; to resign a fortnight after taking office would make them the laughing-stock of the country.

Mr. Gladstone, Herbert, and Graham then resigned. Of the Peelite group the Duke of Argyll and Canning remained.

*Feb.* 22.— After considering various *sites*, we determined to ask the Manchester school to yield us, at any rate for to-morrow, the old place devoted to ex-ministers.[1] Sir J. Graham expressed his wish to begin the affair, on the proposal of the first name [of the committee].

Cardwell came at 4 to inform me that he had declined to be my successor; and showed me his letter, which gave as his reason disinclination to step into the cabinet over the bodies of his friends. It seems that Palmerston and Lord Lansdowne, who assists him, sent Canning to Lord Aberdeen to invoke his aid with Cardwell and prevail on him to retract. But Lord Aberdeen, though he told Canning that he disapproved (at variance here with what Graham and I considered to be his tone on Monday, but agreeing with a note he wrote in obscure terms the next morning), said he could not make such a request to Cardwell, or again play the peculiar part he had acted a fortnight ago. The cabinet on receiving Cardwell's refusal were at a deadlock. Application was to be made, or had been made, to Sir Francis Baring, but it seems that he is reluctant; he is, however, the best card they have to play.

*Feb.* 28.— On Sunday, Sir George Lewis called on me, and

[1] On Feb. 23, he writes to Mr. Hayter, the government whip: 'We have arranged to sit in the orthodox ex-ministers' place to-night, *i.e.* second bench immediately below the gangway. This avoids constructions and comparisons which we could hardly otherwise have escaped; and Bright and his friends agreed to give it us. Might I trust to your kindness to have some cards put in the place for us before prayers?'

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said my office had been offered him. This was after being refused by Cardwell and Baring. He asked my advice as to accepting it. This I told him I could not give. He asked if I would assist him with information in case of his accepting. I answered that he might command me precisely as if instead of resigning I had only removed to another department. I then went over some of the matters needful to be made known. On Tuesday he came again, acquainted me with his acceptance, and told me he had been mainly influenced by my promise.[1]

This day at a quarter to three I attended at the palace to resign the seals, and had an audience of about twenty minutes. The Queen, in taking them over, was pleased to say that she received them with great pain. I answered that the decision which had required me to surrender them had been the most painful effort of my public life. The Queen said she was afraid on Saturday night [Feb. 17, when he had dined at the palace] from the language I then used that this was about to happen. I answered that we had then already had a discussion in the cabinet which pointed to this result, and that I spoke as I did, because I thought that to have no reserve whatever with H.M. was the first duty of all those who had the honour and happiness of being her servants. I trusted H.M. would believe that we had all been governed by no other desire than to do what was best for the interests of the crown and the country. H.M. expressed her confidence of this, and at no time throughout the conversation did she in any manner indicate an opinion that our decision had been wrong. She spoke of the difficulty of making arrangements for carrying on the government in the present state of things, and I frankly gave my opinion to H.M. that she would have little peace or comfort in these matters, until parliament should have returned to its old organisation in two political parties; that at present we were in a false position, and that both sides of the House were demoralised — the ministerial side overcharged with an excess of official men, and the way stopped up against expectants, which led to subdivision,

[1] While Lewis went to the exchequer, Sir Charles Wood succeeded Graham at the admiralty, Lord John, then on his way to Vienna, agreed to come back to the cabinet and took the colonial office, which Sir George Grey had left for the home office, where he succeeded Palmerston.

jealousy, and intrigue; the opposition so weak in persons having experience of affairs as to be scarcely within the chances of office, and consequently made reckless by acting without keeping it in view; yet at the same time, the party continued and must continue to exist, for it embodied one of the great fundamental elements of English society. The experiment of coalition had been tried with remarkable advantage under a man of the remarkable wisdom and powers of conciliation possessed by Lord Aberdeen, one in entire possession too of H.M.'s confidence. They intimated that there were peculiar disadvantages, too, evidently meaning Lord J. Russell. I named him in my answer, and said I thought that even if he had been steady, yet the divisions of the ministerial party would a little later have brought about our overthrow.[1] H.M. seeming to agree in my main position, as did the Prince, asked me: But when will parliament return to that state? I replied I grieved to say that I perceived neither the time when, nor the manner how, that result is to come about; but until it is reached, I fear that Y.M. will pass through a period of instability and weakness as respects the executive. She observed that the prospect is not agreeable. I said, True, madam, but it is a great consolation that all these troubles are upon the surface, and that the throne has for a long time been gaining and not losing stability from year to year. I could see but one danger to the throne, and that was from encroachments by the House of Commons. No other body in the country was strong enough to encroach. This was the consideration which had led my resigning colleagues with myself to abandon office that we might make our stand against what we thought a formidable invasion. . . . I thought the effect of the resistance was traceable in the good conduct of the House of Commons last night, when another attempt at encroachment was proposed and firmly repelled. . . . I expressed my comfort at finding that our motives were so graciously appreciated by H.M. and withdrew.

Loud was the public outcry. All the censure that had been foretold in case they should refuse to join, fell with double force upon them for first joining and then seceding.

[1] This seems to contradict the proposition in the article on Greville in the *Eng. Hist. Rev.* of 1887.

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Lord Clarendon pronounced their conduct to be actually worse and more unpatriotic than Lord John's. The delight at Brooks's Club was uproarious, for to the whigs the Peelites had always been odious, and they had been extremely sorry when Palmerston asked them to join his government.[1] For a time Mr. Gladstone was only a degree less unpopular in the country than Cobden and Bright themselves. The newspapers declared that Gladstone's epitaph over the Aberdeen administration might be applied with peculiar force to his own fate. The short truth seems to be that Graham, Gladstone, and Palmerston were none of them emphatic or explicit enough beforehand on the refusal of the committee when the government was formed, though the intention to refuse was no doubt both stated and understood. Graham admitted afterwards that this omission was a mistake. The world would be astonished if it knew how often in the pressure of great affairs men's sight proves short. After the language used by Mr. Gladstone about the inquiry, we cannot wonder that he should have been slow to acquiesce. The result in time entirely justified his description of the Sebastopol committee.[2] But right as was his judgment on the merits, yet the case was hardly urgent enough to make withdrawal politic or wise. Idle gossip long prevailed, that Graham could not forgive Palmerston for not having (as he thought) helped to defend him in the matter of opening Mazzini's letters; that from the first he was bent on overthrowing the new minister; that he worked on Gladstone; and that the alleged reason why they left was not the real one. All the evidence is the other way; that Graham could not resist the obvious want of the confidence of parliament, and that Gladstone could not bear a futile and perilous inquiry. That they both regretted that they had yielded to overpersuasion in joining, against their own feelings and judgment, is certain. Graham even wrote to Mr. Gladstone in the following summer that his assent to joining Palmerston was perhaps the greatest mistake of his public life. In

[1] *Greville*, III. i. p. 246.

[2] Mr. Gladstone projected and partly executed some public letters on all this, to be addressed, like the Neapolitan letters, to Lord Aberdeen.

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Æt. 46.

Mr. Gladstone's case, the transaction gave a rude and protracted shock to his public influence.

Lord Palmerston meanwhile sat tight in his saddle. When the crisis first began, Roebuck in energetic language had urged him to sweep the Peelites from his path, and at any rate he now very steadily went on without them. Everybody took for granted that his administration would be temporary. Mr. Gladstone himself gave it a twelvemonth at most. As it happened, Lord Palmerston was in fact, with one brief interruption, installed for a decade. He was seventy-one; he had been nearly forty years in office; he had worked at the admiralty, war department, foreign office, home office; he had served under ten prime ministers—Portland, Perceval, Liverpool, Canning, Goderich, Wellington, Grey, Melbourne, Russell, Aberdeen. He was not more than loosely attached to the whigs, and he had none of the strength of that aristocratic tradition and its organ, the Bedford sect. The landed interest was not with him. The Manchester men detested him. The church in all its denominations was on terms of cool and reciprocated indifference with one who was above all else the man of this world. The press he knew how to manage. In every art of parliamentary sleight of hand he was an expert, and he suited the temper of the times, while old maxims of government and policy were tardily expiring, and the forces of a new era were in their season gathering to a head.

## CHAPTER VII

### POLITICAL ISOLATION

*(1855–1856)*

ἥκιστα γὰρ πόλεμος ἐπὶ ῥητοῖς χωρεῖ. — THUC. i. 122.

War is the last thing in all the world to go according to programme.

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STATESMEN are invincibly slow to learn the lesson put by Thucydides long centuries ago into the mouth of the Athenian envoys at Sparta, and often repeated in the same immortal pages, that war defies all calculations, and if it be protracted comes to be little more than mere matter of chance, over which the combatants have no control. A thousand times since has history proved this to be true. Policy is mastered by events; unforeseen sequels develop novel pretexts, or grow into startling and hateful necessities; the minister finds that he is fastened to an inexorable chain.

Mr. Gladstone now had this fatal law of mundane things brought home to him. As time went on, he by rapid intuition gained a truer insight into the leading facts. He realised that Mahometan institutions in the Ottoman empire were decrepit; that the youthful and vigorous elements in European Turkey were crushed under antiquated and worn-out forms and forces unfit for rule. He awoke to the disquieting reflection how the occupation of the Principalities had been discussed, day after day and month after month, entirely as a question of the payment of forty thousand pounds a year to Turkey, or as a violation of her rights as suzerain, but never in reference to the well-being, happiness, freedom, or peace of the inhabitants. He still held that the war in its origin was just, for it had been absolutely necessary, he

said, to cut the meshes of the net in which Russia had entangled Turkey. He persisted in condemning the whole tone and policy of Russia in 1854. By the end of 1854, in Mr. Gladstone's eyes, this aggressive spirit had been extinguished, the Czar promising an almost unreserved acceptance of the very points that he had in the previous August angrily rejected. The essential objects of the war were the abolition of Russian rights in the Principalities, and the destruction of Russian claims upon Greek Christians under Ottoman sway. These objects, Mr. Gladstone insisted, were attained in January 1855, when Russia agreed to three out of the Four Points—so the bases of agreement were named—and only demurred upon the plan for carrying out a portion of the fourth. The special object was to cancel the preponderance of Russia in the Black Sea. No fewer than seven different plans were simultaneously or in turn propounded. They were every one of them admitted to be dubious, inefficient, and imperfect. I will spare the reader the mysteries of limitation, of counterpoise, of counterpoise and limitation mixed. Russia preferred counterpoise, the allies were for limitation. Was this preference between two degrees of the imperfect, the deficient, and the ineffective a good ground for prolonging a war that was costing the allies a hundred million pounds a year, and involved to all the parties concerned the loss of a thousand lives a day? Yet, for saying No to this question, Mr. Gladstone was called a traitor, even by men who in 1853 had been willing to content themselves with the Vienna note, and in 1854 had been anxious to make peace on the basis of the Four Points. In face of pleas so wretched for a prolongation of a war to which he had assented on other grounds, was he bound to silence? 'Would it not, on the contrary,' he exclaimed, 'have been the most contemptible effeminacy of character, if a man in my position, who feels that he has been instrumental in bringing his country into this struggle, were to hesitate a single moment when he was firmly convinced in his own mind that the time had arrived when we might with honour escape from it?'

The prospect of reducing Russia to some abstract level of

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strength, so as to uphold an arbitrary standard of the balance of power—this he regarded as mischief and chimera. Rightly he dreaded the peril of alliances shifting from day to day, like quicksands and sea-shoals—Austria moved by a hundred strong and varying currents, France drawing by unforeseen affinities towards Russia. Every war with alliances, he once said, should be short, sharp, decisive.[1]

As was to be expected, the colleagues from whom he had parted insisted that every one of his arguments told just as logically against the war in all its stages, against the first as legitimately as the last. In fact, we can never say a plain sure aye or no to questions of peace and war, after the sword has once left the scabbard. They are all matter of judgment on the balance of policy between one course and another; and a very slight thing may incline the balance either way, even though mighty affairs should hang on the turn of the scale. Meanwhile, as the months went on, Sebastopol still stood untaken, excitement grew, people forgot the starting point. They ceased to argue, and sheer blatancy, at all times a power, in war-time is supreme. Mr. Gladstone's trenchant dialectic had no more chance than Bright's glowing appeals. Shrewd and not unfriendly onlookers thought that Graham and Gladstone were grievously mistaken in making common cause with the peace party, immediately after quitting a war government, and quitting it, besides, not on the issues of the war. Herbert was vehement in his remonstrances. The whole advantage of co-operation with the Manchester men, he cried, would be derived by them, and all the disrepute reaped by us. 'For the purposes of peace, they were the very men we ought to avoid. As advocates for ending the war, they were out of court, for they were against beginning it.'[2] If Gladstone and Graham had gone slower, their friends said, they might have preached moderation to ministers and given reasonable advice to people out of doors. As it was, they threw the game into the hands of Lord Palmerston. They were stamped as doctrinaires, and what was worse, doctrinaires suspected of a spice of personal animus against old friends. Herbert insisted that the Man-

[1] See Appendix.

[2] Herbert to Gladstone, May 27, 1855.

chester school 'forgot that the people have flesh and blood, and propounded theories to men swayed by national feeling.' As a matter of fact, this was wholly untrue. Cobden and Bright, as everybody nowadays admits, had a far truer perception of the underlying realities of the Eastern question in 1854, than either the Aberdeen or the Palmerston cabinet, or both of them put together. What was undeniable was that the public, with its habits of rough and ready judgment, did not understand, and could not be expected to understand, the new union of the Peelites with a peace party, in direct opposition to whose strongest views and gravest warnings they had originally begun the war. 'In Gladstone,' Cornewall Lewis said, 'people ascribe to faction, or ambition, or vanity, conduct which I believe to be the result of a conscientious, scrupulous, ingenuous, undecided mind, always looking on each side of a question and magnifying the objections which belong to almost every course of action.'[1]

A foreign envoy then resident in England was struck by the general ignorance of facts even among leading politicians. Of the friends of peace, he says, only Lord Grey and Gladstone seemed to have mastered the Vienna protocols: the rest were quite astonished when the extent of the Russian concessions was pointed out to them. The envoy dined with Mr. Gladstone at the table of the Queen, and they talked of Milner Gibson's motion censuring ministers for losing the opportunity of the Vienna conferences to make a sound and satisfactory peace. Mr. Gladstone said to him that he should undertake the grave responsibility of supporting this motion, 'because in his opinion the concessions promised by Russia contain sufficient guarantees. Those very concessions will tear to pieces all the ancient treaties which gave an excuse to Russia for interfering in the internal affairs of Turkey.'[2]

At all times stimulated rather than checked by a difficult situation, Mr. Gladstone argued the case for peace to the

[1] *Many Memories*, p. 229.

[2] Vitzthum, *St. Petersburg and London*, i. p. 170. A full account of these parliamentary events from May to July, 1855, is to be found in Martin's *Prince Consort*, iii. pp. 281–307.

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House during the session of 1855 in two speeches of extraordinary power of every kind. His position was perfectly tenable, and he defended it with unsurpassed force. For the hour unfortunately his influence was gone. Great newspapers thought themselves safe in describing one of these performances as something between the rant of the fanatic and the trick of the stage actor; a mixture of pious grimace and vindictive howl, of savage curses and dolorous forebodings; the most unpatriotic speech ever heard within the walls of parliament. In sober fact, it was one of the three or four most masterly deliverances evoked by the Crimean war. At the very same time Lord John Russell was still sitting in the cabinet, though he had held the opinion that at the beginning of May the Austrian proposal ought to have ended the war and led to an honourable peace. The scandal of a minister remaining in a government that persisted in a war condemned by him as unnecessary was intolerable, and Lord John resigned (July 16).

The hopes of the speedy fall of Sebastopol brightened in the summer of 1855, but this brought new alarms to Lord Palmerston. 'Our danger,' he said in remarkable words, 'will then begin — a danger of peace and not a danger of war.' To drive the Russians out of the Crimea was to be no more than a preliminary. England would go on by herself, if conditions deemed by her essential were not secured. 'The British nation is unanimous, for I cannot reckon Cobden, Bright, and Co. for anything.'[1] His account of the public mind was indubitably true. Well might Aberdeen recall to his friends that, with a single exception, every treaty concluded at the termination of our great wars had been stigmatised as humiliating and degrading, ignominious, hollow and unsafe. He cited the peace of Utrecht in 1713, the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748, the peace of Paris in 1763, the peace of Versailles in 1783, and the peace of Amiens in 1801. The single exception was the peace of Paris in 1814. It would have been difficult in this case, he said, for patriotism or faction to discover humiliation 'in a treaty dictated at the head of a victorious army in the capital of the enemy.'

[1] Ashley, ii. pp. 320, 325.

While the storm was raging, Mr. Gladstone made his way with his family to Penmaenmawr, whence he writes to Lord Aberdeen (Aug. 9): 'It was a charitable act on your part to write to me. It is hardly possible to believe one is not the greatest scoundrel on earth, when one is assured of it from all sides on such excellent authority. . . . I am busy reading Homer about the Sebastopol of old time, and all manner of other fine fellows.' In another letter of the same time, written to Sir Walter James, one of the most closely attached of all his friends, he strikes a deeper note:—

*Sept.* 17.—If I say I care little for such an attack you will perhaps think I make little of sympathy like yours and Lord Hardinge's, but such, I beg you and him to believe, is not the case. Public life is full of snares and dangers, and I think it a fearful thing for a Christian to look forward to closing his life in the midst of its (to me at least) essentially fevered activity. It has, however, some excellent characteristics in regard to mental and even spiritual discipline, and among these in particular it absolutely requires the habits of resisting temper and of suppressing pain. I never allow myself, in regard to my public life, to realise, *i.e.* to dwell upon, the fact that a thing is *painful.* Indeed life has no time for such broodings: neither in session nor recess is the year, the day, or the hour long enough for what it brings with it. Nor was there ever a case in which it was so little difficult to pass over and make little of a personal matter: for if indeed it be true, as I fear it is, that we have been committing grave errors, that those errors have cost many thousands of lives and millions of money, and that no glare of success can effectually hide the gloom of thickening complications, the man who can be capable of weighing his own fate and prospects in the midst of such contingencies has need to take a lesson from the private soldier who gives his life to his country at a shilling a day.

'We are on our way back,' he writes at the end of September, 'after a month of sea-bathing and touring among the Welsh mountains. Most of my time is taken up with Homer and Homeric literature, in which I am immersed with great delight up to my ears; perhaps I should say out

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of my depth.' Mr. Gladstone was one of the men whom the agitations of politics can never submerge. Political interests were what they ought to be, a very serious part of life; but they took their place with other things, and were never suffered, as in narrower natures sometimes happens, to blot out 'stars and orbs of sun and moon' from the spacious firmament above us. He now found a shelter from the intensity of the times in the systematic production of his book on Homer, a striking piece of literature that became the most definite of his pursuits for two years or more. His children observed that he never lounged or strolled upon the shore, but when the morning's labour was over — and nothing was ever allowed to break or mutilate the daily spell of serious work — he would stride forth staff in hand, and vigorously breast the steepest bluffs and hills that he could find. This was only emblematic of a temperament to which the putting forth of power was both necessity and delight. The only rest he ever knew was change of effort.

While he was on the Welsh coast Sebastopol fell, after a siege of three hundred and fifty days. Negotiations for peace were opened tolerably soon afterwards, ending, after many checks and diplomatic difficulties, in the Treaty of Paris (March 30, 1856), as to which I need only remind the reader, with a view to a future incident in Mr. Gladstone's history, that the Black Sea was neutralised, and all war-ships of every nation excluded from its waters. Three hundred thousand men had perished. Countless treasure had been flung into the abyss. The nation that had won its last victory at Waterloo did not now enhance the glory of its arms, nor the power of its diplomacy, nor the strength of any of its material interests. It was our French ally who profited. The integrity of Turkey was so ill confirmed that even at the Congress of Paris the question of the Danubian Principalities was raised in a form that in a couple of years reduced Turkish rule over six millions of her subjects to the shadow of smoke. Of the confidently promised reform of Mahometan dominion there was never a beginning nor a sign. The vindication of the standing European order proved so ineffectual that the Crimean war was only the sanguinary

prelude to a vast subversion of the whole system of European states.



II

Other interests now came foremost in Mr. Gladstone's mind. The old ground so constantly travelled over since the death of Peel was for three years to come traversed again with fatiguing iteration. In the spring of 1856 Lord Derby repeated the overtures that he had made in specific form in 1851 and in 1855. The government was weak, as Mr. Gladstone had predicted that it would be. Lord Derby told Sir William Heathcote, through whom he and Mr. Gladstone communicated, that as almost any day it might be overturned, and he might be sent for by the Queen, he was bound to see what strength he might rely upon, and he was anxious to know what were Mr. Gladstone's views on the possibility of co-operation. What was the nature of his relations with other members of the Peel government who had also been in the cabinet of Lord Aberdeen? Did they systematically communicate? Were they a party? Did they intend to hold and to act together? These questions were soon answered: —

On the first point, Mr. Gladstone said, you cannot better describe my views for present purposes than by saying that they are much like Lord Derby's own as I understand them — there was nothing in them to prevent a further consideration of the subject, if public affairs should assume such a shape as to recommend it. On the second, I said Graham, Herbert, Cardwell, and I communicated together habitually and confidentially; that we did not seek to act, but rather eschewed acting, as a party; that our habits of communication were founded upon long political association, general agreement, and personal friendship; that they were not, however, a covenant for the future, but a natural growth and result of the past.

Then he proceeds to tell with a new and rather startling conclusion the old story of the Peelite responsibility for the broken and disorganised state of the House of Commons: —

We, the friends of Lord Aberdeen, were a main cause of disunion and weakness in the executive government, and must be so,

BOOK IV. 1856.

from whichever side the government were formed, so long as we were not absolutely incorporated into one or the other of the two great parties. For though we had few positively and regularly following us, yet we had indirect relations with others on both sides of the House, which tended to relax, and so far disable, party connections, and our existence as a section encouraged the formation of other sections all working with similar effects. I carried my feeling individually so far upon the subject as even to be ready, if I had to act alone, to surrender my seat in parliament, rather than continue a cause of disturbance to any government to which I might generally wish well.[1]

This exchange of views with Lord Derby he fully reported to Graham, Herbert, and Cardwell, whom Lord Aberdeen, at his request, had summoned for the purpose. Herbert doubted the expediency of such communications, and Graham went straight to what was a real point. 'He observed that the question was of the most vital consequence, Who should lead the House of Commons? This he thought must come to me, and could not be with Disraeli. I had said and repeated, that I thought we could not bargain Disraeli out of the saddle; that it must rest with him (so far as we were concerned) to hold the lead if he pleased; that besides my looking to it with doubt and dread, I felt he had this right; and that I took it as one of the *data* in the case before us upon which we might have to consider the question of political junction, and which might be seriously affected by it.' Of these approaches in the spring of 1856 nothing came. The struggle in Mr. Gladstone's mind went on with growing urgency. He always protested that he never at any time contemplated an isolated return to the conservative ranks, but 'reunion of a body with a body.'

Besides his sense of the vital importance of the reconstruction of the party system, he had two other high related aims. The commanding position that had first been held in the objects of his activity by the church, then, for a considerable space, by the colonies, was now filled by finance. As he put it in a letter to his sympathetic brother Robertson: He

[1] Memo. April 17, 1856.

saw two cardinal subjects for the present moment in public affairs, a rational and pacific foreign policy, and second, the due reduction in our establishments, economy in administration, and finance to correspond. In 1853 he had, as he believed, given financial pledges to the country. These pledges were by the present ministers in danger of being forgotten. They were incompatible with Palmerston's spirit of foreign policy. His duty, then, was to oppose that policy, and to labour as hard as he could for the redemption of his pledges. Yet isolated as he was, he had little power over either one of these aims or the other. The liberal party was determined to support the reigning foreign policy, and this made financial improvement desperate. Of Lord Derby's friends he was not hopeful, but they were not committed to so dangerous a leader.[1] As he put it to Elwin, the editor of the *Quarterly:* There is a policy going a begging; the general policy that Sir Robert Peel in 1841 took office to support — the policy of peace abroad, of economy, of financial equilibrium, of steady resistance to abuses, and promotion of practical improvements at home, with a disinclination to questions of reform, gratuitously raised.[2]

His whole mind beset, possessed, and on fire with ideals of this kind, and with sanguine visions of the road by which they might be realised — it was not in the temperament of this born warrior to count the lions in his path. He was only too much in the right, as his tribulations of a later date so amply proved, in his perception that neither Palmerston nor Palmerstonian liberals would take up the broken clue of Peel. The importunate presence of Mr. Disraeli was not any sharper obstacle to a definite junction with conservatives, than was the personality of Lord Palmerston to a junction with liberals. As he had said to Graham in November 1856, 'the pain and strain of public duty is multiplied tenfold by the want of a clear and firm ground from which visibly to act.' In rougher phrase, a man must have a platform and work with a party. This indeed is for sensible men one of the rudiments of practical politics.

[1] To Robertson Gladstone, Dec. 16, 1856.
[2] To Mr. Elwin, Dec. 2, 1856.

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Of a certain kind of cant about public life and office Mr. Gladstone was always accustomed to make short work. The repudiation of desire for official power, he at this time and always roundly denounced as 'sentimental and maudlin.' One of the not too many things that he admired in Lord Palmerston was 'the manly frankness of his habitual declarations that office is the natural and proper sphere of a public man's ambition, as that in which he can most freely use his powers for the common advantage of his country.' 'The desire for office,' said Mr. Gladstone, 'is the desire of ardent minds for a larger space and scope within which to serve the country, and for access to the command of that powerful machinery for information and practice, which the public departments supply. He must be a very bad minister indeed, who does not do ten times the good to the country that he would do when out of office, because he has helps and opportunities which multiply twenty fold, as by a system of wheels and pulleys, his power for doing it.' It is true, as the smallest of men may see — and the smaller the man, the more will he make of it — that this sterling good sense may set many a snare for the politician; but then even the consecrated affectations of our public life have their snares too.

The world was not in the secret of the communications with Lord Derby, but the intrinsic probabilities of a case often give to the public a trick of divination. In the middle of December (1856) articles actually appeared in the prints of the day announcing that Mr. Gladstone would at the opening of the next session figure at the head of the opposition. The tories, they said, wanted a leader, Mr. Gladstone wanted a party. They were credulous, he was ingenious. The minority in a party must yield to a majority, and he stood almost by himself. He would be a returned prodigal in the conservative household, for unlike Sir James Graham, he had never merged himself in the ordinary ruck of liberalism. A tory peer writes to assure him that there never was such a chance for the reunion of the party. Even the nobleman who had moved Mr. Gladstone's expulsion from the Carlton said that he supposed reunion must pretty soon come off. A few, per-

haps under a score, made a great noise, but if Lord Derby would only form a government, the noisy ones would be as glad as the rest. True — and here the writer came nearer to the central difficulty — 'Disraeli ought *at first* to lead the Commons,' because he had been leader before; second, he had the greater number of followers; third, because on public grounds he must desire to see Mr. Gladstone at the exchequer; and to transfer to him both the great subject of finance and the great prize of leadership would be impossible. So easy do flat impossibilities ever seem to sanguine simpletons in Pall Mall. Another correspondent has been staying at a grand country-house, full of tory company, and the state of parties was much discussed — 'There was one unanimous opinion,' he tells Mr. Gladstone, 'that nothing could save the conservative party except electing you for their leader.' The same talk was reported from the clubs. 'The difficulty was Disraeli, not so much for any damage that his hostility could do the party, as because Lord Derby had contracted relations with him which it would perhaps be impossible for him to disown.'

Meanwhile the sagacious man in the tents of the tories, whose course was so neatly chalked out for him by sulky followers not relishing his lead, was, we may be sure, entirely wide-awake, watching currents, gales, and puffs of wind without haste, without rest. Disraeli made a bold stroke for party consolidation by inviting to his official dinner at the opening of the session of 1857, General Peel, the favourite brother of the great minister and his best accredited representative. Peel consulted Mr. Gladstone on the reply to Disraeli's invitation, and found him strongly adverse. The public, said Mr. Gladstone, views with much jealousy every change of political position not founded on previous parliamentary co-operation for some national object. Mr. Gladstone might have put it on the narrower ground that attendance at the dinner would be an explicit condonation of Disraeli's misdeeds ten years before, and a direct acceptance of his leadership henceforth.

Elwin believed that he had the direct sanction of Lord Derby for a message from him to Mr. Gladstone suggesting

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communication. After much ruminating and consulting, Mr. Gladstone wrote (Dec. 13, 1856) in sufficiently circuitous language to Elwin, that though he should not be justified in communicating with Lord Derby, considered simply as a political leader with whom he was not in relations of party, yet, he proceeds, 'remembering that I was once his colleague, and placing entire reliance on his honour, I am ready to speak to him in confidence and without reserve on the subject of public affairs, should it be his desire.' His three friends, Graham, Aberdeen, and Herbert, still viewed the proceeding with entire disfavour, and no counsels were ever dictated by sincerer affection and solicitude. Your financial scheme, says Graham, is conceived in the very spirit of Peel; it would be most conducive to national welfare; you alone and in high office can carry it; but it must be grafted on a pacific policy and on a moderate scale of public expenditure; it is not under Palmerston that such blessings are to be anticipated; but then are they more probable under Derby and Disraeli? Lord Aberdeen took another line, insisting that to make any sort of approach to Lord Derby, after joining Palmerston only the previous year, would be unjustifiable; the bare apprehension of a vicious policy would be no intelligible ground for changing sides; more tangible reasons would be needed, and they were only too likely soon to arrive from Palmerston's foreign policy. Then a reasonable chance might come. Herbert, in his turn, told Mr. Gladstone that though he might infuse vigour and respectability into a party that stood much in need of both, yet he would always be in a false position. 'Your opinions are essentially progressive, and when the measures of any government must be liberal and progressive, the country will prefer the men whose antecedents and mottoes are liberal, while the conservatives will always prefer a leader whose prejudices are with themselves.' As Graham put it to him: 'If you were to join the tory party to-morrow, you would have neither their confidence nor their real good will, and they would openly break with you in less than a year.' It all reminds one of the chorus in Greek plays, sagely expostulating with a hero bent on some dread deed of fate.

III



In the autumn of 1856 ecclesiastical questions held a strong place in Mr. Gladstone's interests. The condemnation of Archdeacon Denison for heresy roused him to lively indignation. He had long interviews with the archdeacon, drafted answers for him, and flung his whole soul into the case, though he was made angry by Denison's oscillations and general tone. 'Gladstone tells me,' said Aberdeen, 'that he cannot sleep for it, and writes to me volumes upon volumes. He thinks that Denison ought to have been allowed to show that his doctrine, whether in accordance or not with the articles, is in accordance with scripture. And he thinks the decision ought to have been in his case as it was in Gorham's, that the articles are comprehensive, that they admit Denison's view of the Eucharist as well as that of his opponents.'[1]

His closing entry for the year (1856) depicts an inner mood: —

It appears to me that there are few persons who are so much as I am enclosed in the invisible net of pendent steel. I have never known what tedium was, have always found time full of calls and duties, life charged with every kind of interest. But now when I look calmly around me, I see that these interests are for ever growing and grown too many and powerful, and that were it to please God to call me I might answer with reluctance. . . . See how I stand. Into politics I am drawn deeper every year; in the growing anxieties and struggles of the church I have no less [interest] than I have heretofore; literature has of late acquired a new and powerful hold upon me; the fortunes of my wife's family, which have had, with all their dry detail, all the most exciting and arduous interest of romance for me now during nine years and more; seven children growing up around us, and each day the object of deeper thoughts and feelings, and of higher hopes to Catherine and me, — what a network is here woven out of all that the heart and all that the mind of man can supply. . . .

[1] Simpson's *Many Memories*, p. 238.

## CHAPTER VIII

### GENERAL ELECTION — NEW MARRIAGE LAW

*(1857)*

> No wave on the great ocean of Time, when once it has floated past us, can be recalled. All we can do is to watch the new form and motion of the next, and launch upon it to try in the manner our best judgment may suggest our strength and skill. — GLADSTONE.

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IN spite of wise counsels of circumspection, Mr. Gladstone clung to the chances that might come from personal communication between himself and Lord Derby. Under pressure from his friends, he agreed with Lord Derby to put off an interview until after the debate on the address. Then, after parliament met, they took the plunge. We are now at the beginning of February.

This afternoon at three I called on Lord Derby and remained with him above three hours, in prosecution of the correspondence which had passed between us.

I told him that I deliberately disapproved of the government of Lord Palmerston, and was prepared and desirous to aid in any proper measures which might lead to its displacement. That so strong were my objections that I was content to act thus without inquiring who was to follow, for I was convinced that any one who might follow would govern with less prejudice to the public interests. That in the existing state of public affairs I did not pretend to see far, but thus far I saw clearly. I also told him that I felt the isolated position in which I stood, and indeed in which we who are called Peelites all stand, to be a great evil as tending to prolong and aggravate that parliamentary disorganisation which so much clogs and weakens the working of our government; and I denounced myself as a public nuisance,

adding that it would be an advantage if my doctor sent me abroad for the session.

He concurred in the general sentiments which I had expressed, but said it was material for him, as he had friends with and for whom to act, and as I had alluded to the possibility, in the event of a change, of his being invited by the Queen to form a government, to consider beforehand on what strength he could rely. He said he believed his friends were stronger than any other single section, but that they were a minority in both Houses. Weak in 1852, he was weaker now, for it was natural that four years of exclusion from office should thin the ranks of a party, and such had been his case. He described the state of feeling among his friends, and adverted to the offer he had made in 1851 and in 1855. The fact of an overture made and not accepted had led to much bitterness or anger towards us among a portion of his adherents. He considered that in 1855 Lord Palmerston had behaved far from well either to Herbert and me, or to him.[1]

Other interviews followed; resolutions were discussed, amendments, forms of words. They met at discreet dinners. 'Nobody,' Lord Derby tells him, 'except Disraeli knows the length to which our communications have gone.' Nobody, that is to say, excepting also Mr. Gladstone's three personal allies; them he kept accurately informed of all that passed at every stage. On February 13 the government presented their budget. In introducing his plan, Cornewall Lewis rashly quoted, and adopted as his own, the terrible heresy of Arthur Young, that to multiply the number of taxes is a step towards equality of burden, and that a good system of taxation is one that bears lightly on an infinite number of points. The reader will believe how speedily an impious opinion of this sort kindled volcanic flame in Mr. Gladstone's breast. He thought moreover that he espied in the ministerial plan a prospective deficiency a year ahead. To maintain a steady surplus of income over expenditure, he reflected; to lower indirect taxes when excessive in amount, for the relief of the people, and bearing in mind the reproductive power inherent in such operations; to simplify our

[1] See above pp. 525–8.

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fiscal system by concentrating its pressure on a few well chosen articles of extended consumption; and to conciliate support to the income-tax by marking its temporary character, and by associating it with beneficial changes in the tariff: these aims have been for fifteen years the labour of our life. By this budget he found them in principle utterly reversed. He told his friends that the shade of Peel would appear to him if he did not oppose such plans with his whole strength. When the time came (Feb. 3), 'the government was fired into from all quarters. Disraeli in front; Gladstone on flank; John Russell in rear. Disraeli and Gladstone rose at same time. Speaker called the former. Both spoke very well. It was a night of triumph for Gladstone.'[1]

There is another note of the proceedings on Lewis's budget:—

*Saturday, Feb.* 14.—I was engaged to meet Graham, Herbert, and Cardwell at Lord Aberdeen's, and I knew from Lord Derby that he was to see his friends at noon. So I went to him on my way, first to point out the *deficit* of between five and six millions for 1858–9 which is created by this budget, with the augmentations of it in subsequent years; and secondly, to say that in my opinion it was hopeless to attack the scheme in detail, and that it must be resisted on the ground of deficit as a whole, to give a hope of success. I said that if among the opposition there still lingered a desire to revive and extend indirect taxation, I must allow that the government had bid high for support from those who entertained it; that it was the worst proposition I had ever heard from a minister of finance. At Lord Aberdeen's we examined the figures of the case, and drafted two resolutions which expressed our opinions.

The more serious point, however, was that they all wished me to insist upon taking the motion into my own hands; and announcing this to Lord J. Russell as well as to Lord Derby. As to the second I had no difficulty, could I have acceded to the first. But I did not doubt that Disraeli would still keep hold of so much of his notice of Feb. 3 as had not been set aside by the

[1] Phillimore's Diary.

budget. I said that from motives which I could neither describe nor conquer I was quite unable to undertake to enter into any squabble or competition with him for the possession of a post of prominence. We had much conversation on political prospects: Graham wishing to see me lead the Commons under Lord John as prime minister in the Lords; admitting that the same thing would do under Lord Derby, but for Disraeli, who could not be thrown away like a sucked orange; and I vehemently deploring our position, which I said, and they admitted, was generally condemned by the country.

I again went to Derby, as he had requested, at five; and he told me that he had had with him Malmesbury, Hardwicke, Disraeli, Pakington, Walpole, Lytton. They had all agreed that the best motion would be a resolution (from Disraeli) on Monday, before the Speaker left the chair, which would virtually rest the question on deficit. I made two verbal suggestions on the resolution to improve its form.

Late in the evening Lord Derby writes, enclosing a note received at dinner from Disraeli, 'I hope I may take it for granted that there is now a complete understanding between us as to the move on Monday night.' 'My dear lord,' runs the note, 'I like the resolution as amended. It is improved. Yours ever, D.' When Monday came, the move was duly made, and Gladstone and Disraeli again fought side by side as twin champions of the cause of reduced expenditure. Time had incensed Mr. Gladstone still further, and he conducted a terrific fusillade. He recounted how between 1842 and 1853 two and twenty millions of taxation had been taken off without costing a farthing. 'A man may be glad and thankful to have been an Englishman and a member of the British parliament during these years, bearing his part in so blessed a work. But if it be a blessed work, what are we to say of him who begins the undoing of it?' The proposal of the government showed a gross, a glaring, an increasing deficiency, a deficiency unparalleled in the financial history of a quarter of a century. It was deluding the people and trifling with national interests. It is certain that no financier before or since ever, in Cromwellian phrase, made such a

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conscience of the matter, or ever found the task more thankless.[1] Great as was the effect of the close and searching argument that accompanied all this invective, even Mr. Gladstone's friends thought it too impassioned and too severe upon Lewis, in whose favour there was consequently a reaction. The cool minister contented himself with quoting Horace's lines upon the artist skilled in reproducing in his bronze fierce nails or flowing hair, yet who fails because he lacks the art to seize the whole.[2]

At the end of February (1857), at a party meeting of 160 members, Lord Derby told his men that the course taken by Mr. Disraeli upon the budget had been concerted with him and had his entire approval; spoke with admiration of Mr. Gladstone; justified political union when produced by men finding themselves drawn to the same lobby by identity of sentiment; and advised them not to decline such accession of strength as would place their party in a position to undertake the government of the country. The newspapers cried out that the long-expected coalition had at length really taken place. In their hearts the conservative managers were not sure that Mr. Gladstone's adhesion would not cost them too dearly. 'He would only benefit us by his talents' (says Lord Malmesbury) 'for we should lose many of our supporters. The Duke of Beaufort, one of our staunchest adherents, told me at Longleat that if we coalesced with the Peelites he would leave the party, and I remember in 1855, when Lord Derby attempted to form a government, and offered places to Gladstone and Herbert, that no less than eighty members of the House of Commons threatened to leave him.'[3] All these schemes and calculations were destined to be rudely interrupted.

## II

While he was acting with Lord Derby on the one hand, Mr. Gladstone sought counsel from Cobden on the other, having great confidence in his 'firmness and integrity of

[1] The reader will find a candid statement of the controversy in Northcote, *Financial Policy*, pp. 306–329.

[2] *Ars Poetica*, 32–5.

[3] Malmesbury, *Memoirs*, ii. pp. 56–7. See above, p. 536.

purpose,' and hoping for support from him in face of a faint-hearted disposition to regard Lord Palmerston as a magician against whom it was vain to struggle. Events were speedily to show that Lord Palmerston had more magic at his disposal than his valiant foe believed. The agent of the British government in the China seas — himself, by the way, a philosophic radical — had forced a war upon the Chinese. The cabinet supported him. On the motion of Cobden, the House censured the proceeding. Mr. Gladstone, whose hatred of high-handed iniquities in China had been stirred in early days,[1] as the reader may recall, made the most powerful speech in a remarkable debate. 'Gladstone rose at half-past nine,' Phillimore says (Mar. 3), 'and delivered for nearly two hours an oration which enthralled the House, and which for argument, dignity, eloquence, and effect is unsurpassed by any of his former achievements. It won several votes. Nobody denies that his speech was the finest delivered in the memory of man in the House of Commons.' Apart from a rigorous examination of circumstance and fact in the special case, as in the famous precedent of Don Pacifico seven years before, he raised the dispute to higher planes and in most striking language. He examined it both by municipal and international law, and on 'the higher ground of natural justice' — 'that justice which binds man to man; which is older than Christianity, because it was in the world before Christianity; which is broader than Christianity, because it extends to the world beyond Christianity; and which underlies Christianity, for Christianity itself appeals to it. . . . War taken at the best is a frightful scourge upon the human race; but because it is so, the wisdom of ages has surrounded it with strict laws and usages, and has required formalities to be observed which shall act as a curb upon the wild passions of man. . . . You have dispensed with all these precautions. You have turned a consul into a diplomatist, and that metamorphosed consul is forsooth to be at liberty to direct the whole might of England against the lives of a defenceless

[1] See above, p. 225.

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people.' Disraeli in turn denounced proceedings which began in outrage and ended in ruin, mocked at 'No reform, new taxes, Canton blazing, Persia invaded,' as the programme of the party of progress and civilisation, and reprobated a prime minister who had professed almost every principle, and connected himself with almost every party. Palmerston replied by a stout piece of close argument, spiced by taunts about coalitions, combinations, and eloquent flourishes. But this time in parliament his slender majority failed him.

*March* 3, '57. — Spoke on Cobden's resolutions, and voted in 263–247 — a division doing more honour to the House of Commons than any I ever remember. Home with C. and read Lord Ellesmere's *Faust*, being excited, which is rare with me. (*Diary.*)

The repulse was transient. The minister appealed to the constituencies, and won a striking triumph. Nearly all the Manchester politicians, with Bright and Cobden at their head, were ruthlessly dismissed, and the election was a glorious ratification not only of the little war among the Chinese junks, but of the great war against the Czar of Russia, and of much besides. This, said Mr. Gladstone, was not an election like that of 1784, when Pitt appealed on the question whether the crown should be the slave of an oligarchic faction; nor like that of 1831, when Grey sought a judgment on reform; nor like that of 1852, when the issue was the expiring controversy of protection. The country was to decide not upon the Canton river, but whether it would or would not have Lord Palmerston for prime minister. 'The insolent barbarian wielding authority at Canton who had violated the British flag' was indeed made to play his part. But the mainspring of the electoral victory was to be sought in the profound public weariness of the party dispersions of the last eleven years; in the determination that the country should be governed by men of intelligible opinions and definite views; in the resolution that the intermediate tints should disappear; in the conviction that Palmerston was the helmsman for the hour. The result was justly compared to the plébiscite taken in France four or five years earlier, whether they would have Louis Napoleon for

emperor or not. It was computed that no fewer than one-sixth, or at best one-seventh, of the most conspicuous men in the former House of Commons were thrust out. The Derbyites were sure that the report of the coalition with the Peelites had done them irreparable harm, though their electioneering was independent. At Oxford Mr. Gladstone was returned without opposition. On the other hand, his gallant attempt to save the seat of his brother-in-law in Flintshire failed, his many speeches met much rough interruption, and to his extreme mortification Sir Stephen Glynne was thrown out.

The moral of the general election was undoubtedly a heavy shock to Mr. Gladstone, and he was fully conscious of the new awkwardness of his public position. Painful change seemed imminent even in his intimate relations with cherished friends. Sidney Herbert had written to him that as for Gladstone, Graham, and himself, they were not only broken up as a party, but the country intended to break them up and would resent any attempt at resuscitation; they ought on no account to reappear as a triumvirate on their old bench. Mr. Gladstone's reply discloses in some of its phrases a peculiar warmth of sensibility, of which he was not often wont to make much display: —

*To Sidney Herbert.*

*March* 22, 1857. — I did not reply to your letter when it arrived, because it touches principally upon subjects with respect to which I feel that my mind has been wrought into a state of sensitiveness which is excessive and morbid. For the last eleven years, with the exception of only two among them, the pains of political strife have not for us found their usual and proper compensation in the genial and extended sympathies of a great body of comrades, while suspicion, mistrust, and criticism have flanked us on both sides and in unusual measure. Our one comfort has been a concurrence of opinion which has been upon the whole remarkably close, and which has been cemented by the closer bonds of feeling and of friendship. The loss of this one comfort I have no strength to face. Contrary to your supposition, I have nothing with which to replace it; but the attachments, which

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began with political infancy, and which have lived through so many storms and so many subtler vicissitudes will never be replaced. You will never be able to get away from me as long as I can cling to you, and if at length, urged by your conscience and deliberate judgment, you effect the operation, the result will not be to throw me into the staff of Lord Derby. I shall seek my duty, as well as consult my inclination, first, by absconding from what may be termed general politics, and secondly, by appearing, wherever I must appear, only in the ranks.

I can neither give even the most qualified adhesion to the ministry of Lord Palmerston, nor follow the liberal party in the abandonment of the very principles and pledges which were original and principal bonds of union with it. So, on the other hand, I never have had any hope of conservative reconstruction except (and that slender and remote) such as presupposed the co-operation — I am now speaking for the House of Commons only — of yourself and Graham in particular. By adopting Reform as a watchword of present political action he has certainly inserted a certain amount of gap between himself and me, which may come to be practically material or may not. If you make a gap upon this opportunity, I believe it will be a novelty in political history: it will be the first case on record of separation between two men, all of whose views upon every public question, political, administrative, or financial, are I believe in as exact accordance as under the laws of the human mind is possible. . . .

His leaning towards the conservative party seemed to become more decided rather than less. Lord Aberdeen had written to him as if the amalgamation of Peel's friends with the liberal party had practically taken place. 'If that be true,' Mr. Gladstone replies (April 4, 1857), 'then I have been deceiving both the world and my constituents, and the deception has reached its climax within the last fortnight, during which I have been chosen without opposition to represent Oxford under a belief directly contrary in the minds of the majority of my constituents.' He saw nothing but evil in Lord Palmerston's supremacy. That was his unending refrain. He tells one of his constituents, the state of things 'is likely to end in much political con-

fusion if it is not stopped by the failure of Lord Palmerston's physical force, the only way of stopping it which I could view with regret, for I admire the pluck with which he fights against the infirmities of age, though in political and moral courage I have never seen a minister so deficient.' Cobden asked him in the course of the first session of the new parliament, to take up some position adverse to the ministers. 'I should not knowingly,' Mr. Gladstone replies (June 16, 1857), 'allow any disgust with the state of public affairs to restrain me from the discharge of a public duty; but I arrived some time ago at the conclusion, which has guided my conduct since the dissolution, that the House of Commons would sooner and more healthily return to a sense of its own dignity and of its proper functions, if let alone by a person who had so thoroughly worried both it and the country as myself.'

III

This stern resolve to hold aloof did not last. Towards the end of the session a subject was brought before parliament that stirred him to the very depths of heart and conscience. It marked one more stage of the history of English laws in that immense process of the secularisation of the state, against which, in his book of 1838, Mr. Gladstone had drawn up, with so much weight of reading and thought, a case so wholly unavailing. The legal doctrine of marriage had been established against the theological doctrine by Lord Hardwicke's famous act of 1753, for that measure made the observance of certain requirements then set up by law essential to a good marriage. A further fundamental change had begun with the legislation of civil marriage in 1836. The conception of marriage underlying such a change obviously removed it from sacrament, or anything like a sacrament, to the bleak and frigid zone of civil contract; it was antagonistic, therefore, to the whole ecclesiastical theory of divorce.[1]

[1] It is a striking indication of the tenacity of custom against logic that in France, though civil marriage was made not merely permissive, as with us, but compulsory in 1792, divorce was banished from French law from 1816 down to 1884.

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A royal commission issued a report in 1853, setting forth the case against the existing system of dissolving marriage, and recommending radical changes. In the following year the cabinet of which Mr. Gladstone was a member framed and introduced a bill substantially conforming to these recommendations. For one reason or another it did not become law, nor did a bill of similar scope in 1856. In the interval of leisure that followed, Mr. Gladstone was pressed, perhaps by Bishop Wilberforce, thoroughly to consider the matter. With his prepossessions, there could be little doubt that he would incline to that view of marriage, and the terms and legal effects of loosening the marriage tie, that the Council of Trent had succeeded in making the general marriage law of catholic Europe. The subject was one peculiarly calculated to interest and excite him. Religion and the church were involved. It raised at our own hearths the eternal question of rendering to Cæsar what is Cæsar's, and to the church what belongs to the church. It was wrapped up with topics of history and of learning. It could not be discussed without that admixture of legality and ethics which delights a casuistic intellect. Above all, it went to the root both of that deepest of human relations, and of that particular branch of morals, in which Mr. Gladstone always felt the vividest concern. So, in short, being once called upon for a practical purpose to consider divorce and the many connected questions of re-marriage, he was inevitably roused to a fervour on one side, not any less heated and intense than the fervour of the mighty Milton on the other side two centuries before. He began operations by an elaborate article in the *Quarterly Review*.[1] Here he flings himself upon the well-worn texts in the Bible familiar to the readers of *Tetrachordon*, — if, indeed, *Tetrachordon* have any readers, — with a dialectical acuteness and force that only make one wonder the more how a mind so powerful as Mr. Gladstone's could dream that, at that age of the world, men would suffer one of the most far-reaching of all our social problems, whatever be the right or wrong social solution, to be in the slightest degree affected by

[1] July 1857. Reprinted in *Gleanings*, vi. p. 47.

a Greek word or two of utterly disputable and unfixed significance.

I may note in passing that in another department of supposed Levitical prohibition — the case of the wife's sister — he had in 1849 strongly argued against relaxation, mainly on the ground that it would involve an alteration of the law and doctrines of the church of England, and therefore of the law of Christianity.[1] Experience and time revolutionised his point of view, and in 1869, in supporting a bill legalising these marriages, he took the secular and utilitarian line, and said that twelve or fourteen years earlier (about the time on which we are now engaged) he formed the opinion that it was the mass of the community to which we must look in dealing with such a question, and that the fairest course would be to legalise the marriage contracts in question, and legitimise their issue, leaving to each religious community the question of attaching to such marriages a religious character.[2]

The Divorce bill of 1857 was introduced in the Lords, and passed by them without effective resistance. It was supported by the Archbishop of Canterbury and nine other prelates. Authorities no less exalted than Bishop Wilberforce were violently hostile, even at one stage carrying amendments (ultimately rejected), not only for prohibiting the inter-marriage of the guilty parties, but actually imposing a fine or imprisonment on either of them. This, I fancy, is the high-water mark of the ecclesiastical theory in the century.[3] Lord Mahon in a letter to Mr. Gladstone at this date pictures Macaulay's New Zealander being taken to the House of Lords and hearing learned lords and reverend prelates lay down the canon that marriage is indissoluble by the law of England and by the law of the church. But who, he might have asked, are those two gentlemen listening so intently? Oh, these are two gentlemen whose marriages were dissolved last year. And that other man? Oh, he was divorced last week. And those

[1] House of Commons, June 20, 1849.
[2] *Ibid.*, July 20, 1869. See also *Gleanings*, vi. p. 50.
[3] It may be said that the exaction of damages comes to the same thing.

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three ladies? Oh, their marriages may in all probability be dissolved in another year or two. Still this view of the absurdity of existing practice did not make a convert.

As soon as the bill came down to the House of Commons Mr. Gladstone hastened up to London in the dog-days. 'A companion in the railway carriage,' he wrote to Mrs. Gladstone, 'more genial than congenial, offered me his *Times*, and then brandy! This was followed by a proposal to smoke, so that he had disabled me from objecting on personal grounds.' Tobacco, brandy at odd hours, and the newspaper made a triple abomination in a single dose, for none of the three was ever a favourite article of his consumption. In London he found the counsels of his friends by no means encouraging for the great fight on which he was intent. They deprecated anything that would bring him into direct collision with Lord Palmerston. They urged that violent opposition now would be contrasted with his past silence, and with his own cabinet responsibility for the very same proposal. Nothing would be intelligible to the public, Lord Aberdeen said, beyond a 'carefully moderated course.' But a carefully moderated course was the very last thing possible to Mr. Gladstone when the flame was once kindled, and he fought the bill with a holy wrath as vehement as the more worldly fury with which Henry Fox, from very different motives, had fought the marriage bill of 1753. The thought that stirred him was indicated in a phrase or two to his wife at Hawarden: '*July* 31. — Parliamentary affairs are very black; the poor church gets deeper and deeper into the mire. I am to speak to-night; it will do no good; and the fear grows upon me from year to year that when I finally leave parliament, I shall not leave the great question of state and church better, but perhaps even worse, than I found it.'

The discussion of the bill in the Commons occupied no fewer than eighteen sittings, more than one of them, according to the standard of those primitive times, inordinately long. In the hundred encounters between Mr. Gladstone and Bethell, polished phrase barely hid unchristian desire to retaliate and provoke. Bethell boldly taunted Mr. Gladstone with insincerity. Mr. Gladstone, with a vivacity very

like downright anger, reproached Bethell with being a mere hewer of wood and drawer of water to the cabinet who forced the bill into his charge; with being disorderly and abusing the privileges of speech by accusations of insincerity, 'which have not only proceeded from his mouth but gleamed from those eloquent eyes of his, which have been continuously turned on me for the last ten minutes, instead of being addressed to the chair.' On every division those who affirmed the principle of the bill were at least two to one. 'All we can do,' Mr. Gladstone wrote to his wife, 'is to put shoulder to shoulder, and this, please God, we will do. Graham is with us, much to my delight, and much too, let me add, to my surprise. I am as thankful to be in parliament for this (almost) as I was for the China vote. . . . Yesterday ten and a-half hours, rather angry; to-day with pacification, but still tough and prolonged.' An unfriendly but not wholly unveracious chronicler says of this ten hours' sitting (August 14) on a single clause: 'Including questions, explanations, and interlocutory suggestions, Mr. Gladstone made nine-and-twenty speeches, some of them of considerable length. Sometimes he was argumentative, frequently ingenious and critical, often personal, and not less often indignant at the alleged personality of others.'

He made no pretence of thinking the principle of divorce *a vinculo* anything but an immense evil, but he still held himself free, if that view were repudiated, to consider the legislative question of dissolubility and its conditions. He resorted abundantly to what Palmerston called 'the old standard set-up form of objecting to any improvement, to say that it does not carry out all the improvements of which the matter in hand is susceptible.' One of the complaints of which he made most was the inequality in the bill between the respective rights of husband and wife. 'It is the special and peculiar doctrines of the Gospel,' he said, 'respecting the personal relation of every Christian, whether man or woman, to the person of Christ, that form the firm, the broad, the indestructible basis of the equality of the sexes under the Christian law.' Again, 'in the vast majority of instances where the woman falls into sin, she does so from

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motives less impure and ignoble than those of the man.' He attacks with just vigour the limitation of legal cruelty in this case to the cruelty of mere force importing danger to life, limb, or health, though he was shocked in after years, as well he might be, at the grotesque excess to which the doctrine of 'mental cruelty' has been carried in some States of the American Union. In this branch of the great controversy, at any rate, he speaks in a nobler and humaner temper than Milton, who writes with a tyrannical Jewish belief in the inferiority of women to men, and wives to husbands, that was in Mr. Gladstone's middle life slowly beginning to melt away in English public opinion. His second complaint, and in his eyes much the more urgent of the two, was the right conferred by the government bill upon divorced persons to claim marriage by a clergyman in a church, and still more bitterly did he resent the obligation imposed by the bill upon clergymen to perform such marriages. Here the fight was not wholly unsuccessful, and modifications were secured as the fruit of his efforts, narrowing and abating, though not removing, his grounds of objection.[1]

IV

Before the battle was over, he was torn away from the scene by a painful bereavement. Mrs. Gladstone was at Hagley nursing her beloved sister, Lady Lyttelton. He wrote to his wife in the fiercest hours of the fight (11 Carlton House Terrace, Aug. 15): 'I read too plainly in your letter of yesterday that your heart is heavy, and mine too is heavy along with yours. I have been in many minds about my duty to-day; and I am all but ready to break the bands even of the high obligations that have kept me here with

[1] In republishing in 1878 his article from the *Quarterly* (*Gleanings*, vi. p. 106), he says his arguments have been too sadly illustrated by the mischievous effects of the measure. The judicial statistics, however, hardly support this view, that petitions for divorce were constantly increasing, and at an accelerating rate of progression. In England the proportion of divorce petitions to marriages and the proportion of divorce decrees to population are both of them lower than they were a few years ago. Mr. Gladstone used to desire the prohibition of publicity in these proceedings, until he learned the strong view of the president of the Court that the hideous glare of this publicity acts probably as no inconsiderable deterrent.

reference to the marriage bill. You have only to speak the word by telegraph or otherwise, showing that I can help to give any of the support you need, and I come to you. As matters stand I am wanted in the House to-day, and am wanted for the Divorce bill again on Monday.' Before Monday came, Lady Lyttelton was no more. Four days after her death, Mr. Gladstone wrote to Mr. Arthur Gordon from Hagley: —

The loss suffered here is a dreadful one, but it is borne in the way which robs death and all evil of its sting. My deceased sister-in-law was so united with my wife; they so drew from their very earliest years, and not less since marriage than before it, their breath so to speak in common, that the relation I bore to her conveys little even of what I have lost; but that again is little compared to my wife's bereavement; and far above all to that of Lyttelton, who now stands lonely among his twelve children. But the retrospect from first to last is singularly bright and pure. She seemed to be one of those rare spirits who do not need affliction to draw them to their Lord, and from first to last there was scarce a shade of it in her life. When she was told she was to die, her pulse did not change; the last communion appeared wholly to sever her from the world, but she smiled upon her husband within a minute of the time when the spirit fled.

# CHAPTER IX

## THE SECOND DERBY GOVERNMENT

(*1858*)

> Extravagance and exaggeration of ideas are not the essential characteristic of either political party in this country. Both of them are composed in the main of men with English hearts and English feelings. Each of them comprises within itself far greater diversities of political principles and tendencies, than can be noted as dividing the more moderate portion of the one from the more moderate portion of the other. . . . But while the great English parties differ no more in their general outlines than by a somewhat varied distribution of the same elements in each, they are liable to be favourably or unfavourably affected and their essential characteristics unduly exaggerated, by circumstances of the order that would be termed accidental. — Gladstone.

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The turn of the political wheel is constantly producing strange results, but none has ever been more strikingly dramatic than when, on February 20, Bright and Milner Gibson, who had been ignominiously thrown out at Manchester the year before, had the satisfaction of walking to the table of the House of Commons as victorious tellers in the division on the Conspiracy to Murder bill that overthrew Lord Palmerston. A plot to slay the French Emperor had been organised by a band of Italian refugees in London. The bombs were manufactured in England. Orsini's design miscarried, but feeling in France was greatly excited, and the French government formally drew attention at St. James's to the fact that bodies of assassins abused our right of asylum. They hinted further that the amity of the crown called for stronger law. Palmerston very sensibly did not answer the French despatch, but introduced a bill with new powers against conspiracy. He in an instant became the

most unpopular man in the country, and the idol of the year before was now hooted in the Park.

Mr. Gladstone was at first doubtful, but soon made up his mind. To Mrs. Gladstone he writes (Feb. 17):—

As respects the Conspiracy bill, you may depend upon our having plenty of fight; the result is doubtful; but if the bill gets into the House of Lords it will pass. Lord Aberdeen is strong against it. From him I went to-day to Lord Lyndhurst, and I found Lord Brougham with him. A most interesting conversation followed with these two wonderful old men at 80 and 86 (coming next birthday) respectively, both in the fullest possession of their faculties, Brougham vehement, impulsive, full of gesticulation, and not a little rambling, the other calm and clear as a deep pool upon rock. Lord Lyndhurst is decidedly against the bill, Brougham somewhat inclines to it; being, as Lord Lyndhurst says, half a Frenchman. [Lord Lyndhurst expounded the matter in a most luminous way from his point of view. Brougham went into raptures and used these words: 'I tell you what, Lyndhurst, I wish I could make an exchange with you. I would give you some of my walking power, and you should give me some of your brains.' I have often told the story with this brief commentary, that the compliment was the highest I have ever known to be paid by one human being to another.][1]

The debate showed a curious inversion of the parts usually played by eminent men. Palmerston vainly explained that he was doing no more than international comity required, and doing no worse than placing the foreign refugee on the same footing in respect of certain offences as the British subject. Mr. Gladstone (Feb. 19), on the other hand, 'as one who has perhaps too often made it his business to call attention to the failings of his countrymen,' contended that if national honour was not henceforth to be a shadow and a name, it

[1] The portion within brackets is from a letter of Mr. Gladstone's to Lady Lyndhurst, Aug. 31, 1883, and he continues: 'I have often compared Lord Lyndhurst in my own mind with the five other lord chancellors who since his time have been my colleagues in cabinet: much to the disadvantage in certain respects of some of them. Once I remember in the Peel cabinet the conversation happened to touch some man (there are such) who was too fond of making difficulties. Peel said to your husband, "That is not your way, Lyndhurst." Of all the intellects I have ever known, his, I think, worked with the least friction.'

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was the paramount, absolute, and imperative duty of Her Majesty's ministers to protest against the imputation upon us of favour for assassination, 'a plant which is congenial neither to our soil nor to the climate in which we live.'[1] One of the truest things said in the debate was Disraeli's incidental observation that 'the House should remember that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, when there is a quarrel between two states, it is generally occasioned by some blunder of a ministry.' Mr. Disraeli perhaps consoled himself by the pithy saying of Baron Brunnow, that if no one made any blunders, there would be no politics. The blood of the *civis Romanus*, however, was up, and Palmerston, defeated by a majority of nineteen, at once resigned.

Lord Derby, whose heart had failed him three years earlier, now formed his second administration, and made one more attempt to bring Mr. Gladstone over to the conservative ranks. Lord Lansdowne had told the Queen that no other government was possible, and an hour after he had kissed hands the new prime minister applied to Mr. Gladstone. The decisions taken by him in answer to this and another application three months later, mark one more of the curious turning points in his career and in the fate of his party.

*Feb.* 20, 1858. — Dined at Herbert's with Graham. We sat till 12½, but did not talk quite through the crisis. Palmerston has resigned. He is down. I must now cease to denounce him. 21. — St. James's morning, and holy communion. Westminster Abbey in evening, when I sat by Sir George Grey. From St. James's I went to Lord Aberdeen's. There Derby's letter reached me. We sent for Herbert and I wrote an answer. Graham arrived and heard it; with slight modifications it went. The case though grave was not doubtful. Made two copies and went

[1] 'Happily for the reputation of the House, but unhappily for the ministry, the debate assumed once more, with Gladstone's eloquence, a statesmanlike character. The foremost speaker of the House showed himself worthy of his reputation . . . much as there was to lament in the too radical tone of his often fine-spun argumentation. His thundering periods were received with thundering echoes of applause.' — Vitzthum, *St. Petersburg and London*, i. p. 273.

off before 6 with S. Herbert. We separated for the evening with the fervent wish that in public life we might never part. CHAP. IX.

Two or three letters exhibit the situation :— ÆT. 49.

*Lord Derby to Mr. Gladstone.*

*St. James's Square, Feb.* 21, 1858. — In consequence of the adverse vote of the other night, in which you took so prominent and distinguished a part, the government, as you know, has resigned; and I have been entrusted by the Queen with the difficult task, which I have felt it my duty not to decline, of forming an administration. In doing so, I am very desirous, if possible, of obtaining the co-operation of men of eminence, who are not at this moment fettered by other ties, and whose principles are not incompatible with my own. Believing that you stand in this position, it would afford me very great satisfaction if I could obtain your valuable aid in forming my proposed cabinet; and if I should be so fortunate as to do so, I am sure there would be on all hands a sincere desire to consult your wishes, as far as possible, as to the distribution of offices. I would willingly include Sidney Herbert in this offer; but I fear he is too intimately associated with John Russell to make it possible for him to accept.

*Mr. Gladstone to Lord Derby.*

10 *Great George Street, Feb.* 21, 1851. — I am very sensible of the importance of the vote taken on Friday; and I should deeply lament to see the House of Commons trampled on in consequence of that vote. The honour of the House is materially involved in giving it full effect. It would therefore be my first wish to aid, if possible, in such a task; and remembering the years when we were colleagues, I may be permitted to say that there is nothing in the fact of your being the head of a ministry, which would avail to deter me from forming part of it.

Among the first questions I have had to put to myself, in consequence of the offer which you have conveyed in such friendly and flattering terms, has been the question whether it would be in my power by accepting it, either alone or in concert with others, to render you material service. After the long years during which we have been separated, there would be various matters

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of public interest requiring to be noticed between us; but the question I have mentioned is a needful preliminary. Upon the best consideration which the moment allows, I think it plain that alone, as I must be, I could not render you service worth your having. The dissolution of last year excluded from parliament men with whom I had sympathies; and it in some degree affected the position of those political friends with whom I have now for many years been united through evil and (much more rarely) through good report. Those who lament the rupture of old traditions may well desire the reconstitution of a party; but the reconstitution of a party can only be effected, if at all, by the return of the old influences to their places, and not by the junction of an isolated person. The difficulty is even enhanced in my case by the fact that in your party, reduced as it is at the present moment in numbers, there is a small but active and not unimportant section who avowedly regard me as the representative of the most dangerous ideas. I should thus, unfortunately, be to you a source of weakness in the heart of your own adherents, while I should bring you no party or group of friends to make up for their defection or discontent.

For the reasons which I have thus stated or glanced at, my reply to your letter must be in the negative.

I must, however, add that a government formed by you at this time will, in my opinion, have strong claims upon me, and upon any one situated as I am, for favourable presumptions, and in the absence of conscientious difference on important questions, for support. I have had an opportunity of seeing Lord Aberdeen and Sidney Herbert; and they fully concur in the sentiments I have just expressed.

Mr. Gladstone had no close personal or political ties with the Manchester men at this moment, but we may well believe that a sagacious letter from Mr. Bright made its mark upon his meditations: —

*Mr. Bright to Mr. Gladstone.*

*Reform Club, Feb.* 21, '58. — Coming down Park Lane just now, I met a leading lawyer of Lord Derby's party, who will doubtless be in office with him if he succeeds in forming a government.

He told me that Lord Derby and his friends were expecting to be able to induce you to join them.

Will you forgive me if I write to you on this matter? I say nothing but in the most friendly spirit, and I have some confidence that you will not misinterpret what I am doing. Lord Derby has only about one-third of the House of Commons with him — and it is impossible by any management, or by any dissolution, to convert this minority into a majority. His minority in the House is greater and more powerful than it is in the country — and any appeal to the country, now or hereafter, must, I think, leave him in no better position than that in which he now finds himself. The whole liberal party in the country dislike him, and they dislike his former leader in the Commons; and notoriously his own party in the country, and in the House, have not much confidence in him. There is no party in the country to rally round him, as Peel was supported in 1841. A Derby government can only exist upon forbearance, and will only last till it is convenient for us and the whigs to overthrow it. Lord Palmerston may give it his support for a time, but he can give it little more than his own vote and speeches, for the liberal constituencies will not forgive their members if they support it. If you join Lord Derby, you link your fortunes with a constant minority, and with a party in the country which is every day lessening in numbers and in power. If you remain on our side of the House, you are with the majority, and no government can be formed without you. You have many friends there, and some who would grieve much to see you leave them — and I know nothing that can prevent your being prime minister before you approach the age of every other member of the House who has or can have any claim to that high office.

If you agree rather with the men opposite than with those among whom you have been sitting of late, I have nothing to say. I am sure you will follow where 'the right' leads, if you only discover it, and I am not hoping or wishing to keep you from the right. I think I am not mistaken in the opinion I have formed of the direction in which your views have for some years been tending. You know well enough the direction in which the opinions of the country are tending. The minority which invites you to join

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it, if honest, must go or wish to go, in an opposite direction, and it cannot therefore govern the country. Will you unite yourself with what must be, from the beginning, an inevitable failure?

Don't be offended, if, by writing this, I seem to believe you will join Lord Derby. I don't believe it — but I can imagine your seeing the matter from a point of view very different to mine — and I feel a strong wish just to say to you what is passing in my mind. You will not be the less able to decide on your proper course. If I thought this letter would annoy you, I would not send it. I think you will take it in the spirit in which it is written. No one knows that I am writing it, and I write it from no idea of personal advantage to myself, but with a view to yours, and to the interests of the country. I may be mistaken, but think I am not. Don't think it necessary to reply to this. I only ask you to read it, and to forgive me the intrusion upon you — and further to believe that I am yours, with much respect.

*Mr. Gladstone to Mr. Bright.*

10 *Great George Street, Feb. 22, '58.* — Your letter can only bear one construction, that of an act of peculiar kindness which ought not to be readily forgotten. For any one in whom I might be interested I should earnestly desire, upon his entering public life, that, if possible, he might with a good conscience end in the party where he began, or else that he might have broad and definite grounds for quitting it. When neither of these advantages appears to be certainly within command, there remains a strong and paramount consolation in seeking, as we best can, the truth and the public interests; and I think it a marked instance of liberality, that you should give me credit for keeping this object in my view.

My seeking, however, has not on the present occasion been very difficult. The opinions, such as they are, that I hold on many questions of government and administration are strongly held; and although I set a value, and a high value, upon the power which office gives, I earnestly hope never to be tempted by its exterior allurements, unless they are accompanied with the reasonable prospect of giving effect to some at least of those opinions and with some adequate opening for public good. On

the present occasion I have not seen such a prospect; and before I received your letter yesterday afternoon I had made my choice.

This ended the first scene of the short fifth act. The new government was wholly conservative.

II

Throughout the whole of this period, Mr. Gladstone's political friends were uneasy about him. 'He writes and says and does too much,' Graham had told Lord Aberdeen (Dec. 1856), and a year and a half later the same correspondent notices a restless anxiety for a change of position, though at Gladstone's age and with his abilities he could not wonder at it. Mr. Gladstone was now approaching fifty; Graham was nearer seventy than sixty; and Aberdeen drawing on to seventy-five. One of the most eminent of his friends confessed that he was 'amazed at a man of Gladstone's high moral sense of feeling being able to *bear* with Dizzy. I can only account for it on the supposition, which I suppose to be the true one, that personal dislike and distrust of Palmerston is the one absorbing feeling with him. . . . I see no good ground for the violent personal prejudice which is the sole ruling motive of Gladstone's and Graham's course — especially when the alternative is such a man as Dizzy.' Then comes some angry language about that enigmatic personage which at this cooling distance of time need not here be transcribed. At the end of 1856 Lord Aberdeen told Mr. Gladstone that his position in the House was 'very peculiar.' 'With an admitted superiority of character and intellectual power above any other member, I fear that you do not really possess the sympathy of the House at large, while you have incurred the strong dislike of a considerable portion of Lord Derby's followers.'

Things grew worse rather than better. Even friendly journalists in the spring of 1858 wrote of him as 'the most signal example that the present time affords of the man of speculation misplaced and lost in the labyrinth of practical politics.' They call him the chief orator and the weakest man in the House of Commons. He has exhibited at every

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stage traces of an unhappy incoherence which is making him a mere bedouin of parliament, a noble being full of spirit and power, but not to be tamed into the ordinary ways of civil life. His sympathies hover in hopeless inconsistency between love for righteous national action, good government, freedom, social and commercial reform, and a hankering after a strong, unassailable executive in the old obstructive tory sense. He protests against unfair dealing with the popular voice in the Principalities on the Danube, but when the popular voice on the Thames demands higher honours for General Havelock he resists it with the doctrine that the executive should be wholly free to distribute honours as it pleases. He is loudly indignant against the supersession of parliament by diplomacy, but when a motion is made directly pointing to the rightful influence of the House over foreign affairs, he neither speaks nor votes. Is it not clear beyond dispute that his cannot be the will to direct, nor the wisdom to guide the party of progress out of which the materials for the government of this country will have to be chosen?[1]

In organs supposed to be inspired by Disraeli, Mr. Gladstone's fate is pronounced in different terms, but with equal decision. In phrases that must surely have fallen from the very lips of the oracle itself, the public was told that 'cerebral natures, men of mere intellect without moral passion, are quite unsuited for governing mankind.' The days of the mere dialectician are over, and the rulers of Christendom are no longer selected from the serfs of Aristotle. Without the emotions that soar and thrill and enkindle, no man can attain 'a grand moral vision.' When Mr. Gladstone aims at philosophy, he only reaches casuistry. He reasons like one of the sons of Ignatius Loyola. What their Society is to the Jesuit, his own individualism is to Mr. Gladstone. He supports his own interests as much from intellectual zeal as from self-love. A shrewd observer is quoted: 'looking on Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Sidney Herbert sitting side by side, the former with his rather saturnine face and straight black hair, and the latter eminently handsome, with his bright, cold smile and subtlety of aspect, I

[1] See *Spectator*, May 8, 1858.

have often thought that I was beholding the Jesuit of the closet really devout, and the Jesuit of the world, ambitious, artful, and always on the watch for making his rapier thrusts.' Mr. Gladstone, in a word, is extremely eminent, but strangely eccentric, 'a Simeon Stylites among the statesmen of his time.' [1]

In May an important vacancy occurred in the ministerial ranks by Lord Ellenborough's resignation of the presidency of the board of control. This became the occasion of a renewed proposal to Mr. Gladstone. He tells the story in a memorandum prepared (May 22) for submission to Aberdeen and Graham, whom Lord Derby urged him to consult.

*Memorandum by Mr. Gladstone submitted to Lord Aberdeen and Sir James Graham. May* 22, '58.

*Secret.* — Last week after Mr. Cardwell's notice but before the debate began, Mr. Walpole, after previously sounding Sir William Heathcote to a similar effect, called me aside in the lobby of the House of Commons and inquired whether I could be induced to take office. I replied that I thought that question put by him of his own motion — as he had described it — was one that I could hardly answer. It seemed plain, I said, that the actual situation was one so entirely belonging to the government as it stood, that they must plainly work through it unchanged; that the head of the government was the only person who could make a proposal or put a question about taking office in it; I added, however, that my general views were the same as in February.

This morning I had a note from Walpole asking for an appointment; and he called on me at four o'clock accordingly. He stated that he came by authority of Lord Derby to offer me the board of control or, if I preferred it, the colonial office. That he had told Lord Derby I should, he thought, be likely to raise difficulties on two points: first, the separation from those who have been my friends in public life; secondly, the leadership of the House of Commons. I here interrupted him to say it must be in his option to speak or to be silent on the latter of these subjects;

[1] *Press*, April 7, 1858.

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it was one which had never been entertained or opened by me in connection with this subject, since the former of the two points had offered an absolute preliminary bar to the acceptance of office. He, however, explained himself as follows, that Mr. Disraeli had stated his willingness to surrender the leadership to Sir James Graham, if he were disposed to join the government; but that the expressions he had used in his speech of Thursday [1] (apparently those with respect to parties in the House and to office), seemed to put it beyond the right of the government to make any proposal to him. He at the same time spoke in the highest terms not only of the speech, but of the position in which he thought it placed Sir James Graham; and he left me to infer that there would have been, but for the cause named, a desire to obtain his co-operation as leader of the House of Commons. With respect to the proposal as one the acceptance of which would separate me from my friends, he hoped it was not so. It was one made to me alone, the immediate vacancy being a single one; but the spirit in which it was made was a desire that it should be taken to signify the wish of the government progressively to extend its basis, as far as it could be effected compatibly with consistency in its opinions. He added that judging from the past he hoped he might assume that there was no active opposition to the government on the part of my friends, naming Lord Aberdeen, Sir James Graham, and the Duke of Newcastle.

I told him with respect to the leadership that I thought it handsome on the part of Mr. Disraeli to offer to waive it on behalf of Sir James Graham; that it was a subject which did not enter into my decision for the reason I had stated; and I hinted also that it was one on which I could never negotiate or make stipulations. It was true, I said, I had no broad differences of principle from the party opposite; on the whole perhaps I differed more from Lord

[1] I wish to state that it is by the courtesy of hon. gentlemen that I occupy a seat on this (the ministerial) side of the House, although I am no adherent of Her Majesty's government. By no engagement, express or implied, am I their supporter. On the contrary, my sympathies and opinions are with the liberal party sitting on the opposite side of the House, and from recent kind communications I have resumed those habits of friendly intercourse and confidential communication with my noble friend (Lord John Russell) which formerly existed between us. — *May* 20, 1858.

Palmerston than from almost any one, and this was more on account of his temper and views of public conduct, than of any political opinions. Nay more, it would be hard to show broad differences of public principle between the government and the bench opposite.

I said, however, that in my view the proposal which he had made to me could not be entertained. I felt the personal misfortune and public inconvenience of being thrown out of party connection; but a man at the bottom of the well must not try to get out, however disagreeable his position, until a rope or a ladder is put down to him. In this case my clear opinion was that by joining the government I should shock the public sentiment and should make no essential, no important, change in their position.

I expressed much regret that accidental causes had kept back from my view at the critical moment the real extent of Lord Derby's proposals in February; that I answered him then as an individual with respect to myself individually. . . . I could not separate from those with whom I had been acting all my life long, in concert with whom all the habits of my mind and my views of public affairs had been formed, to go into what might justly be called a cabinet of strangers, since it contained no man to whom I had ever been a colleague, with the single exception of Lord Derby, and that twelve or fourteen years ago.

While I did not conceive that public feeling would or ought to approve this separation, on the other hand I felt that my individual junction would and could draw no material accession of strength to the cabinet. He made the marked admission that if my acceptance must be without the *approval* of friends, that must undoubtedly be an element of great weight in the case. This showed clearly that Lord Derby was looking to me in the first place, and then to others beyond me. He did not, however, found upon this any request, and he took my answer as an absolute refusal. His tone was, I need not say, very cordial; and I think I have stated all that was material in the conversation, except that he signified they were under the belief that Herbert entertained strong personal feelings towards Disraeli.

Returning home, however, at seven this evening I found a note

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from Walpole expressing Lord Derby's wish in the following words: 'That before you finally decide on refusing to accept the offer he has made either of the colonies or of the India board he wishes you would consult Sir James Graham and Lord Aberdeen.' In order to meet this wish, I have put down the foregoing statement.

Lord Aberdeen agreed with Mr. Gladstone that on the whole the balance inclined to *no*.

Graham, in an admirable letter, truly worthy of a wise, affectionate, and faithful friend, said, 'My judgment is, on this occasion, balanced like your own.' He ran through the catalogue of Mr. Gladstone's most intimate political friends; the result was that he stood alone. Fixed party ties and active official duties would conduce to his present happiness and his future fame. He might form an intimate alliance with Lord Derby with perfect honour. His natural affinities were strong, and his 'honest liberal tendencies' would soon leaven the whole lump and bring it into conformity with the shape and body of the times. As for the leadership in the Commons, Graham had once thought that for Gladstone to sit on the treasury bench with Disraeli for his leader would be humiliation and dishonour. Later events had qualified this opinion. Of course, the abdication of Disraeli could not be made a condition precedent, but the concession would somehow be made, and in the Commons pre-eminence would be Gladstone's, be the conditions what they might. In fine, time was wearing fast away, Gladstone had reached the utmost vigour of his powers, and present opportunities were not to be neglected in vain expectation of better.

III

Before this letter of Graham's arrived, an unexpected thing happened, and Mr. Disraeli himself advanced to the front of the stage. His communication, which opens and closes without the usual epistolary forms, just as it is reproduced here, marks a curious episode, and sheds a strange light on that perplexing figure:—

*Mr. Disraeli to Mr. Gladstone.*

*Confidential.*

I think it of such paramount importance to the public interests, that you should assume at this time a commanding position in the administration of affairs, that I feel it a solemn duty to lay before you some facts, that you may not decide under a misapprehension.

Our mutual relations have formed the great difficulty in accomplishing a result, which I have always anxiously desired.

Listen, without prejudice, to this brief narrative.

In 1850, when the balanced state of parties in the House of Commons indicated the future, I endeavoured, through the medium of the late Lord Londonderry, and for some time not without hope, to induce Sir James Graham to accept the post of leader of the conservative party, which I thought would remove all difficulties.

When he finally declined this office, I endeavoured to throw the game into your hands, and your conduct then, however unintentional, assisted me in my views.

The precipitate ministry of 1852 baffled all this. Could we have postponed it another year, all might have been right.

Nevertheless, notwithstanding my having been forced publicly into the chief place in the Commons, and all that occurred in consequence, I was still constant to my purpose, and in 1855 suggested that the leadership of the House should be offered to Lord Palmerston, entirely with the view of consulting your feelings and facilitating your position.

Some short time back, when the power of dissolution was certain, and the consequences of it such as, in my opinion, would be highly favourable to the conservative party, I again confidentially sought Sir James Graham, and implored him to avail himself of the favourable conjuncture, accept the post of leader in the H. of C., and allow both of us to serve under him.

He was more than kind to me, and fully entered into the state of affairs, but he told me his course was run, and that he had not strength or spirit for such an enterprise.

Thus you see, for more than eight years, instead of thrusting myself into the foremost place, I have been, at all times, actively prepared to make every sacrifice of self for the public good, which

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I have ever thought identical with your accepting office in a conservative government.

Don't you think the time has come when you might deign to be magnanimous?

Mr. Canning was superior to Lord Castlereagh in capacity, in acquirements, in eloquence, but he joined Lord C. when Lord C. was Lord Liverpool's lieutenant, when the state of the tory party rendered it necessary. That was an enduring, and, on the whole, not an unsatisfactory connection, and it certainly terminated very gloriously for Mr. Canning.

I may be removed from the scene, or I may wish to be removed from the scene.

Every man performs his office, and there is a Power, greater than ourselves, that disposes of all this.

The conjuncture is very critical, and if prudently yet boldly managed, may rally this country. To be inactive now is, on your part, a great responsibility. If you join Lord Derby's cabinet, you will meet there some warm personal friends; all its members are your admirers. You may place me in neither category, but in that, I assure you, you have ever been sadly mistaken. The vacant post is, at this season, the most commanding in the commonwealth; if it were not, whatever office you filled, your shining qualities would always render you supreme; and if party necessities retain me formally in the chief post, the sincere and delicate respect which I should always offer you, and the unbounded confidence, which on my part, if you choose you could command, would prevent your feeling my position as anything but a form.

Think of all this in a kindly spirit. These are hurried lines, but they are heartfelt. I was in the country yesterday, and must return there to-day for a county dinner. My direction is Langley Park, Slough. But on Wednesday evening I shall be in town. — B. Disraeli. *Grosvenor Gate, May* 25, 1858.

None of us, I believe, were ever able to persuade Mr. Gladstone to do justice to Disraeli's novels, — the spirit of whim in them, the ironic solemnity, the historical paradoxes, the fantastic glitter of dubious gems, the grace of high comedy, all in union with a social vision that often pierced deep below the surface. In the comparative stiff-

ness of Mr. Gladstone's reply on this occasion, I seem to hear the same accents of guarded reprobation: —

*Mr. Gladstone to Mr. Disraeli.*

11 *Carlton House Terrace, May* 25, '58. — My dear Sir, — The letter you have been so kind as to address to me will enable me, I trust, to remove from your mind some impressions with which you will not be sorry to part.

You have given me a narrative of your conduct since 1850 with reference to your position as leader of your party. But I have never thought your retention of that office matter of reproach to you, and on Saturday last I acknowledged to Mr. Walpole the handsomeness of your conduct in offering to resign it to Sir James Graham.

You consider that the relations between yourself and me have proved the main difficulty in the way of certain political arrangements. Will you allow me to assure you that I have never in my life taken a decision which turned upon those relations.

You assure me that I have ever been mistaken in failing to place you among my friends or admirers. Again I pray you to let me say that I have never known you penurious in admiration towards any one who had the slightest claim to it, and that at no period of my life, not even during the limited one when we were in sharp political conflict, have I either felt any enmity towards you, or believed that you felt any towards me.

At the present moment I am awaiting counsel which at Lord Derby's wish I have sought. But the difficulties which he wishes me to find means of overcoming, are broader than you may have supposed. Were I at this time to join any government I could not do it in virtue of party connections. I must consider then what are the conditions which make harmonious and effective co-operation in cabinet possible — how largely old habits enter into them — what connections can be formed with public approval — and what change would be requisite in the constitution of the present government, in order to make any change worth a trial.

I state these points fearlessly and without reserve, for you have yourself well reminded me that there is a Power beyond us that disposes of what we are and do, and I find the limits of choice in public life to be very narrow. — I remain, etc.

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The next day Mr. Gladstone received Graham's letter already described. The interpretation that he put upon it was that although Graham appeared to lean in favour of acceptance, 'yet the counsel was indecisive.' On ordinary construction, though the counsellor said that this was a case in which only the man himself could decide, yet he also said that acceptance would be for the public good. 'Your affirmative advice, had it even been more positive, was not approval, nor was Lord Aberdeen's. On the contrary it would have been like the orders to Balaam, that he should go with the messengers of Balak, when notwithstanding the command, the act was recorded against him.' We may be quite sure that when a man draws all these distinctions, between affirmative advice, positive advice, approval, he is going to act without any advice at all, as Mr. Gladstone was in so grave a case bound to do. He declined to join.

*Mr. Gladstone to Lord Derby.*

*Private.*

11 *C. H. Terrace, May* 26, '58.—I have this morning received Sir James Graham's reply, and I have seen Lord Aberdeen before and since. Their counsel has been given in no narrow or unfriendly spirit. It is, however, indecisive, and leaves upon me the responsibility which they would have been glad if it had been in their power to remove. I must therefore adhere to the reply which I gave to Mr. Walpole on Saturday; for I have not seen, and I do not see, a prospect of public advantage or of material accession to your strength, from my entering your government single-handed.

Had it been in your power to raise fully the question whether those who were formerly your colleagues, could again be brought into political relation with you, I should individually have thought it to be for the public good that, under the present circumstances of the country, such a scheme should be considered deliberately and in a favourable spirit. But I neither know that this is in your power, nor can I feel very sanguine hopes that the obstacles in the way of this proposal on the part of those whom it would embrace, could be surmounted. Lord Aberdeen is the person who could best give a dispassionate and weighty opinion on that

subject. For me the question, confined as it is to myself, is a narrow one, and I am bound to say that I arrive without doubt at the result.

'I hope and trust,' said Graham, when he knew what Mr. Gladstone had done, 'that you have decided rightly; my judgment inclined the other way. I should be sorry if your letter to Lord Derby led him to make any more extended proposal. It could not possibly succeed, as matters now stand; and the abortive attempt would be injurious to him. The reconstruction of the fossil remains of the old Peel party is a hopeless task. No human power can now reanimate it with the breath of life; it is decomposed into atoms and will be remembered only as a happy accident, while it lasted.'[1]

IV

In one remarkable debate of this summer the solitary statesman descended from his pillar. Now was the time of the memorable scheme for the construction of the Suez Canal, that first emanated from the French group of Saint Simonian visionaries in the earlier half of the century. Their dream had taken shape in the fertile and persevering genius of Lesseps, and was at this time the battle-ground of engineers, statesmen, and diplomatists in every country in Europe. For fifteen years the British government had used all their influence at Constantinople to prevent the Sultan from sanctioning the project. In June a motion of protest was made in the House of Commons. Lord Palmerston persisted that the scheme was the greatest bubble that ever was imposed upon the credulity and simplicity of the people of this country; the public meetings on its behalf were got up by a pack of foreign projectors; traffic by the railway would always beat traffic by steamer through the canal; it would be a step towards the dismemberment of the Turkish

[1] 'I wish,' said Mr. Disraeli to Bishop Wilberforce in 1862, 'you could have induced Gladstone to join Lord Derby's government when Lord Ellenborough resigned in 1858. It was not my fault that he did not: I almost went on my knees to him.'—*Life*, iii. p. 70.

Vitzthum reports a conversation with Mr. Disraeli in January 1858, of a different tenor: 'We are at all times ready,' he said, 'to take back this deserter, but only if he surrenders unconditionally.'—Vitzthum, i. p. 269.

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empire; it would tend to dismember our own empire by opening a passage between the Mediterranean and the Indian ocean, which would be at the command of other nations and not at ours. Away, then, with such a sacrifice of the interest of Great Britain to philanthropic schemes and philosophic reveries! So much for the sound practical man. Mr. Gladstone followed. Don't let us, he said, have governments and ex-governments coming down to instruct us here on bubble schemes. As a commercial project, let the Suez Canal stand or fall upon commercial grounds. With close reasoning, he argued against the proposition that the canal would tend to sever Turkey from Egypt. As to possible danger to our own interests, was it not a canal that would fall within the control of the strongest maritime power in Europe? And what could that power be but ourselves? Finally, what could be more unwise than to present ourselves to the world as the opponents of a scheme on the face of it beneficial to mankind, on no better ground than remote and contingent danger to interests of our own, with the alleged interest of Turkey merely thrust hypocritically in for the purpose of justifying a policy purely narrow-minded and wholly selfish? The majority against the motion was large, as it was in the case of the seven cardinals against Galileo. Still the canal was made, with some very considerable consequences that were not foreseen either by those who favoured it or those who mocked it as a bubble. M. de Lesseps wrote to Mr. Gladstone from Constantinople that the clearness of his speech had enabled him to use it with good effect in his negotiations with the Porte. 'Your eloquent words, the authority of your name, and the consideration that attaches to your character, have already contributed much and will contribute more still to hinder the darkening and complication of a question of itself perfectly clear and simple, and to avoid the troubling of the relations between two countries of which it is the natural mission to hold aloft *together* the flag of modern civilisation.'

Mr. Gladstone took an active interest in the various measures — some of them extremely singular — proposed by Mr. Disraeli for the transfer of the government of India from

the Company to the crown. Writing early in the year to Sir James Graham he argued that their object should be steadily and vigorously to resist all attempts at creating a monster military and civil patronage, and to insist upon a real check on the Indian minister. He had much conversation with Mr. Bright — not then an intimate acquaintance — on the difficulty of the problem to govern a people by a people. The two agreed strongly as to one prominent possibility of mischief: they both distrusted the discretion confided to the Indian minister in the use of the Indian army. Mr. Gladstone set a mark upon the bill by carrying a clause to provide that the Indian army should not be employed beyond the frontiers of India without the permission of parliament. This clause he privately hoped would 'afford a standing-ground from which a control might be exercised on future Palmerstons.'

# CHAPTER X

## THE IONIAN ISLANDS

(*1858–1859*)

THE world is now taking an immense interest in Greek affairs, and does not seem to know why. But there are very good reasons for it. Greece is a centre of life, and the only possible centre for the Archipelago, and its immediate neighbourhood. But it is vain to think of it as a centre from which light and warmth can proceed, until it has attained to a tolerable organisation, political and economical. I believe in the capacity of the people to receive the boon. — GLADSTONE (1862).

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AT the beginning of October, while on a visit to Lord Aberdeen at Haddo, Mr. Gladstone was amazed by a letter from the secretary of state for the colonies — one of the two famous writers of romance then in Lord Derby's cabinet — which opened to him the question of undertaking a special mission to the Ionian islands. This, said Bulwer Lytton, would be to render to the crown a service that no other could do so well, and that might not inharmoniously blend with his general fame as scholar and statesman. 'To reconcile a race that speaks the Greek language to the science of practical liberty seemed to me a task that might be a noble episode in your career.' The origin of an invitation so singular is explained by Phillimore: —

*November 2nd*, 1858. — Lord Carnarvon (then under-secretary at the colonial office) sent an earnest letter to me to come to the C. O. and advise with Rogers and himself as to drawing the commission. I met Bulwer Lytton there, overflowing with civility. The offer to Gladstone had arisen as I expected from Lord C., and he had told B. L. the conversation which he (C.) and I had together in the summer, in which I told Lord C. that I thought Gladstone would accept a mission extraordinary to Naples. . . .

I risked without authority from G. this communication. Lord C. bore it in mind, and from this suggestion of mine sprang in fact this offer. So Lord C. said to me.

Lord Malmesbury very sensibly observed that to send Mr. Gladstone to Naples was out of the question, in view of his famous letters to Lord Aberdeen. To the new proposal Mr. Gladstone replied that his first impulse on any call from a minister of the crown to see him on public business, would be to place himself at the minister's disposal. The interview did not occur for a week or two. Papers were sent from the colonial office to Hawarden, long letters followed from the secretary of state, and Mr. Gladstone took time to consider. The constitution of the Ionian islands had long been working uneasily, and what the colonial secretary invited him to undertake was an inquiry on the spot into our relations there, and into long-standing embarrassments that seemed to be rapidly coming to a head. Sir John Young, then lord high commissioner of the Ionian islands, had been with him at Eton and at Oxford, besides being a Peelite colleague in parliament, and Mr. Gladstone was not inclined to be the instrument of indicating disparagement of his friend. Then, moreover, he was in favour of 'a very liberal policy' in regard to the Ionian islands, and possibly the cabinet did not agree to a very liberal policy. As for personal interest and convenience, he was not disposed to raise any difficulty in such a case.

The Peelite colleagues whose advice he sought were all, with the single exception of the Duke of Newcastle, more or less unconditionally adverse. Lord Aberdeen (October 8) admitted that Mr. Gladstone's name, acquirements, and conciliatory character might operate powerfully on the Ionians; still many of them were false and artful, and the best of them little better than children. 'It is clear,' he said, 'that Bulwer has sought to allure you with vague declarations and the attractions of Homeric propensities. . . . I doubt if Homer will be a *cheval de bataille* sufficiently strong to carry you safely through the intricacies of this enterprise.' The sagacious Graham also warned him that

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little credit would be gained by success, while failure would be attended by serious inconveniences: in any case to quell 'a storm in a teapot' was no occupation worthy of his powers and position. Sidney Herbert was strong that governments were getting more and more into the bad habit of delegating their own business to other people; he doubted success, and expressed his hearty wish that we could be quit of the protectorate altogether, and could hand the islands bodily over to Greece, to which by blood, language, religion, and geography they belonged.

I have said that these adverse views were almost unqualified, and such qualification as existed was rather remarkable. 'The only part of the affair I should regard with real pleasure,' wrote Lord Aberdeen, 'would be the means it might afford you of drawing closer to the government, and of naturally establishing yourself in a more suitable position; for in spite of Homer and Ulysses, your Ionian work will by no means be *tanti* in itself.' Graham took the same point: 'An approximation to the government may be fairly sought or admitted by you. But this should take place on higher grounds.' Thus, though he was now in fact unconsciously on the eve of his formal entry into a liberal cabinet, expectations still survived that he might re-join his old party.

As might have been expected, the wanderings of Ulysses and the geography of Homer prevailed in Mr. Gladstone's mind over the counsels of parliamentary Nestors. Besides the ancient heroes, there was the fascination of the orthodox church, so peculiar and so irresistible for the anglican school to which Mr. Gladstone belonged. Nor must we leave out of account the passion for public business so often allied with the student's temperament; the desire of the politician out of work for something definite to do; Mr. Gladstone's keen relish at all times for any foreign travel that came in his way; finally, and perhaps strongest of all, the fact that his wife's health had been much shaken by the death of her sister, Lady Lyttelton, and the doctors were advising change of scene, novel interests, and a southern climate. His decision was very early a foregone conclusion. So his

doubting friends could only wish him good fortune. Graham said, 'If your hand be destined to lay the foundation of a Greek empire on the ruins of the Ottoman, no hand can be more worthy, no work more glorious. *Recidiva manu posuissem Pergama* was a noble aspiration;[1] with you it may be realised.'

He hastened to enlist the services as secretary to his commission of Mr. Lacaita, whose friendship he had first made seven years before, as we have seen, amid the sinister tribunals and squalid dungeons of Naples. For dealings with the Greco-Italian population of the islands he seemed the very man. 'As regards Greek,' Mr. Gladstone wrote to him, 'you are one of the few persons to whom one gives credit for knowing everything, and I assumed on this ground that you had a knowledge of ancient Greek, such as would enable you easily to acquire the *kind* of acquaintance with the modern form, such as is, I presume, desirable. That is my own predicament; with the additional disadvantage of our barbarous English pronunciation.' Accompanied by Mrs. Gladstone and their eldest daughter, and with Mr. Arthur Gordon, the son of Lord Aberdeen, and now, after long service to the state, known as Lord Stanmore, for private secretary, Mr. Gladstone left England on November 8, 1858, and he returned to it on the 8th of March 1859.

II

The Ionian case was this. By a treaty made at Paris in November 1815, between Great Britain, Russia, Austria, and Prussia, the seven islands — scattered along the coast from Epiros to the extreme south of the Morea — were constituted into a single free and independent state under the name of the United States of the Ionian Islands, and this state was placed under the immediate and exclusive protection of Great Britain. The Powers only thought of keeping the islands out of more dubious hands, and cared little or not at all about conferring any advantage upon either us or the Ionians. The States were to regulate their own internal organisation, and Great

[1] Virg. *Aen.* iv. 344.

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Britain was 'to employ a particular solicitude with regard to the legislation and general administration of those states,' and was to appoint a lord high commissioner to reside there with all necessary powers and authorities. The Duke of Wellington foretold that it would prove 'a tough and unprofitable job,' and so in truth it did. A constitutional charter in 1817 formed a system of government that soon became despotic enough to satisfy Metternich himself. The scheme has been justly described as a singularly clever piece of work, appearing to give much while in fact giving nothing at all. It contained a decorous collection of chapters, sections, and articles imposing enough in their outer aspect, but in actual operation the whole of them reducible to a single clause enabling the high commissioner to do whatever he pleased.

This rough but not ill-natured despotism lasted for little more than thirty years, and then in 1849, under the influence of the great upheaval of 1848, it was changed into a system of more popular and democratic build. The old Venetians, when for a couple of centuries they were masters in this region, laid it down that the islanders must be kept with their teeth drawn and their claws clipped. Bread and the stick, said Father Paul, that is what they want. This view prevailed at the colonial office, and maxims of Father Paul Sarpi's sort, incongruously combined with a paper constitution, worked as ill as possible. Mr. Gladstone always applied to the new system of 1849 Charles Buller's figure, of first lighting the fire and then stopping up the chimney. The stick may be wholesome, and local self-government may be wholesome, but in combination or rapid alternation they are apt to work nothing but mischief either in Ionian or any other islands. Sir Charles Napier — the Napier of Scinde — who had been Resident in Cephalonia thirty years before, in Byron's closing days, describes the richer classes as lively and agreeable; the women as having both beauty and wit, but of little education; the poor as hardy, industrious, and intelligent — all full of pleasant humour and vivacity, with a striking resemblance, says Napier, to his countrymen, the Irish. The upper class was mainly Italian in origin,

and willingly threw all the responsibility for affairs on the British government. The official class, more numerous in proportion to population than in any country in Europe, scrambled for the petty salaries of paltry posts allotted by popular election. Since 1849 they had increased by twenty-five per cent., and were now one in a hundred of the inhabitants. The clergy in a passive way took part with the demagogues. Men of ability and sense were not wanting, but being unorganised, discouraged, and saturated with distrust, they made no effort to stem the jobbery, corruption, waste, going on around them. Roads, piers, aqueducts, and other monuments of the British protectorate reared before 1849, were falling to pieces. Taxes were indifferently collected. Transgressors of local law went unpunished. In ten years the deficit in the revenue had amounted to nearly £100,000, or two-thirds of a year's income. The cultivators of the soil figured in official reports as naturally well affected, and only wishing to grow their currants and their olives in peace and quietness. But they were extremely poor, and they were ignorant and superstitious, and being all these things it was inevitable that they should nurse discontent with their government. Whoever wanted their votes knew that the way to get them was to denounce the Englishman as ἑτερόδοξος καὶ ξένος, heretic, alien, and tyrant. There was a senate of six members, chosen by the high commissioner from the assembly. The forty-two members of the assembly met below galleries that held a thousand persons, and nothing made their seats and salaries so safe as round declamations from the floor to the audience above, on the greatness of the Hellenic race and the need for union with the Greek kingdom. The municipal officer in charge of education used to set as a copy for the children, a prayer that panhellenic concord might drive the Turks out of Greece and the English out of the seven islands.

Cephalonia exceeded the rest of the group both in population and in vehemence of character, while Zante came first of all in the industry and liveliness of its people.[1] These

[1] See Sir C. Napier's *The Colonies: treating of their value generally and of the Ionian Islands in particular.*

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two islands were the main scene and source of difficulty. In Cephalonia nine years before the date with which we are now dealing, an agrarian rising had occurred more like a bad whiteboy outrage than a national rebellion, and it was suppressed with cruel rigour by the high commissioner of the day. Twenty-two people had been hanged, three hundred or more had been flogged, most of them without any species of judicial investigation. The fire-raisings and destruction of houses and vineyards were of a fierce brutality to match. These Ionian atrocities were the proceedings with which Prince Schwarzenberg had taunted Lord Aberdeen by way of rejoinder to Mr. Gladstone's letters on barbarous misgovernment in Naples, and the feelings that they had roused were still smouldering. Half a dozen newspapers existed, all of them vehemently and irreconcilably unionist, though all controlled by members of the legislative assembly who had taken an oath at the beginning of each parliament to respect and maintain the constitutional rights of the protecting sovereign. The liberty of unlicensed printing, however, had been subject to a pretty stringent check. By virtue of what was styled a power of high police, the lord high commissioner was able at his own will and pleasure to tear away from home, occupation, and livelihood anybody that he chose, and the high police found its commonest objects in the editors of newspapers. An obnoxious leading article was not infrequently followed by deportation to some small and barren rock, inhabited by a handful of fishermen. Not Cherubim and Seraphim, said Mr. Gladstone, could work such a system. A British corporal with all the patronage in his hands, said another observer, would get on better than the greatest and wisest statesman since Pericles, if he had not the patronage. It was little wonder that a distracted lord high commissioner, to adopt the similes of the florid secretary of state, should one day send home a picture like Salvator's Massacre of the Innocents, or Michel Angelo's Last Judgment, and the next day recall the swains of Albano at repose in the landscapes of Claude; should one day advise his chiefs to wash their hands of the Ionians, and on the morrow should hint that perhaps

the best thing would be by a bold *coup d'état* to sweep away the constitution.[1]

III

Immediately after Mr. Gladstone had started, what the secretary of state described as the most serious misfortune conceivable happened. A despatch was stolen from the pigeonholes of the colonial office, and a morning paper printed it. It had been written home some eighteen months before by Sir John Young, and in it he advised his government, with the assent of the contracting powers, to hand over either the whole of the seven islands to Greece, or else at least the five southern islands, while transforming Corfu and its little satellite of Paxo into a British colony. It was true that a few days later he had written a private letter, wholly withdrawing this advice and substituting for it the exact opposite, the suppression namely of such freedom as the islanders possessed. This second fact the public did not know, nor would the knowledge of it have made any difference. The published despatch stood on record, and say what they would, the startling impression could not be effaced. Well might Lytton call it an inconceivable misfortune. It made Austria uneasy, it perturbed France, and it irritated Russia, all of them seeing in Mr. Gladstone's mission a first step towards the policy recommended in the despatch. In the breasts of the islanders it kindled intense excitement, and diversified a chronic disorder by a sharp access of fever. It made Young's position desperate, though he was slow to see it, and practically it brought the business of the high commissioner extraordinary to nought before it had even begun.

He learned the disaster, for disaster it was, at Vienna, and appears to have faced it with the same rigorous firmness and self-command that some of us have beheld at untoward

[1] *Parliamentary Papers, relative to the mission of the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone to the Ionian Islands in* 1858. Presented in 1861. Finlay's *History of Greece*, vii. p. 305, etc. *Letters by Lord Charles Fitzroy, etc., showing the anomalous political and financial position of the Ionian Islands.* (Ridgway, 1850.) *Le Gouvernement des Iles Ioniennes.* Lettre à Lord John Russell, par François Lenormant. (Paris, Amyot, 1861.) *The Ionian Islands in relation to Greece.* By John Dunn Gardner, Esqr., 1859. *Four years in the Ionian Islands.* By Whittingham. Pamphlet by S. G. Potter, D.D. See also *Gleanings*, iv. p. 287.

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moments long after. The ambassador told him that he ought to see the Austrian minister. With Count Buol he had a long interview accordingly, and assured him that his mission had no concern with any question of Ionian annexation whether partial or total. Count Buol on his part disclaimed all aggressive tendencies in respect of Turkey, and stated emphatically that the views and conduct of Austria in her Eastern policy were in the strictest sense conservative.

Embarking at Trieste on the warship *Terrible*, Nov. 21, and after a delightful voyage down the Adriatic, five days after leaving Vienna (Nov. 24th) Mr. Gladstone found himself at Corfu — the famous island of which he had read such memorable things in Thucydides and Xenophon, the harbour where the Athenians had fitted out the expedition to Syracuse, so disastrous to Greek democracy; where the young Octavian had rallied his fleet before the battle of Actium, so critical for the foundation of the empire of the Cæsars; and whence Don John had sallied forth for the victory of Lepanto, so fatal to the conquering might of the Ottoman Turks. It was from Corfu that the brothers Bandiera had started on their tragic enterprise for the deliverance of Italy fourteen years before. Mr. Gladstone landed under a salute of seventeen guns, and was received with all ceremony and honour by the lord high commissioner and his officers.

He was not long in discovering what mischief the stolen despatch had done, and may well have suspected from the first in his inner mind that his efforts to undo it would bear little fruit. The morning after his arrival the ten members for Corfu came to him in a body with a petition to the Queen denouncing the plan of making their island a British colony, and praying for union with Greece. The municipality followed suit in the evening. The whole sequel was in keeping. Mr. Gladstone with Young's approval made a speech to the senate, in which he threw over the despatch, severed his mission wholly from any purpose or object in the way of annexation, and dwelt much upon a circular addressed by the foreign office in London to all its ministers abroad

disclaiming any designs of that kind. He held levees, he called upon the archbishop, he received senators and representatives, and everywhere he held the same emphatic language. He soon saw enough to convince him of the harm done to British credit and influence by the severities in Cephalonia; by the small regard and frequent contempt shown by many Englishmen for the religion of the people for whose government they were responsible; by the diatribes in the London press against the Ionians as brigands, pirates, and barbarians; and by the absence in high commissioners and others 'of tact, good sense, and good feeling in the sense in which it is least common in England, the sense namely in which it includes a disposition to enter into and up to a certain point sympathise with those who differ with us in race, language, and creed.' Perhaps his penetrating eye early discovered to him that forty years of bad rule had so embittered feeling, that even without the stolen despatch, he had little chance.

He made a cruise round the islands. His visit shook him a good deal with respect to two of the points — Corfu and Ithaca — on which it has been customary to dwell as proving Homer's precise local knowledge. The rain poured in torrents for most of the time, but it cleared up for a space to reveal the loveliness of Ithaca. In the island of Ulysses and Penelope he danced at a ball given in his honour. In Cephalonia he was received by a tumultuous mob of a thousand persons, whom neither the drenching rains nor the unexpected manner of his approach across the hills could baffle. They greeted him with incessant cries for union with Greece, thrust disaffected papers into his carriage, and here and there indulged in cries of *κάτω ἡ προστασία*, down with the protectorate, down with the tyranny of fifty years. This exceptional disrespect he ascribed to what he leniently called the history of Cephalonia, meaning the savage dose of martial law nine years before. He justly took it for a marked symbol of the state of excitement at which under various influences the popular mind had arrived. Age and infirmity prevented the archbishop from coming to offer his respects, so after his levee

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Mr. Gladstone with his suite repaired to the archbishop. 'We found him,' says Mr. Gordon, 'seated on a sofa dressed in his most gorgeous robes of gold and purple, over which flowed down a long white beard. . . . Behind him stood a little court of black-robed, black-bearded, black-capped, dark-faced priests. He is eighty-six years old, and his manners and appearance were dignified in the extreme. Speaking slowly and distinctly he began to tell Gladstone that the sole wish of Cephalonia was to be united to Greece, and there was something very exciting and affecting in the tremulous tones of the old man saying over and over again, "*questa infelice isola, questa isola infelice*," as the tears streamed down his cheeks and long silvery beard. It was like a scene in a play.'

At Zante (Dec. 15), the surface was smoother. A concourse of several thousands awaited him; Greek flags were flying on all sides in the strong morning sea-breeze; the town bands played Greek national tunes; the bells were all ringing; the harbour was covered with boats full of gaily dressed people; and the air resounded with loud shouts *ζήτω ὁ φιλέλλην Γλάδστων, ζήτω ἡ ἕνωσις μετὰ τῆς Ἑλλαδος*, Long live Gladstone the Philhellene, hurrah for union with Greece.

Every room and passage in the residency, Mr. Gordon writes to Lord Aberdeen, was already thronged. . . . Upstairs the excitement was great, and as soon as Gladstone had taken his place, in swept Gerasimus the bishop (followed by scores of swarthy priests in their picturesque black robes) and tendered to him the petition for union. But before he could deliver it, Gladstone stopped him and addressed to him and to the assembly a speech in excellent Italian. Never did I hear his beautiful voice ring out more clear or more thrillingly than when he said, '*Ecco l' inganno.*' . . . It was a scene not to be forgotten. The priests, with eye and hand and gesture, expressed in lively pantomime to each other the effect produced by each sentence, in what we should think a most exaggerated way, like a chorus on the stage, but the effect was most picturesque.

He attended a banquet one night, went to the theatre the next, where he was greeted with lusty zetos, and at mid-

night embarked on the *Terrible* on his way to Athens. His stay in the immortal city only lasted for three or four days, and I find no record of his impressions. They were probably those of most travellers educated enough to feel the spell of the Violet Crown. Illusions as to the eternal summer with which poets have blessed the Isles of Greece vanished as they found deep snow in the streets, icicles on the Acropolis, and snow-balling in the Parthenon. He had a reception only a shade less cordial than if he were Demosthenes come back. He dined with King Otho, and went to a *Te Deum* in honour of the Queen's birthday. Finlay, the learned man who had more of the true spirit of history than most historians then alive, took him to a meeting of the legislature; he beheld some of the survivors of the war of independence, and made friends with one valiant lover of freedom, the veteran General Church. Though, thanks to the generosity of an Englishman, they had a university of their own at Corfu, the Ionians preferred to send their sons to Athens, and the Athenian students immediately presented a memorial to Mr. Gladstone with the usual prayer for union with the Hellenic kingdom. On the special object of his visit, he came away from Athens with the impression that opinion in Greece was much divided on the question of immediate union with the Ionian islands. In truth his position had been a false one. Everybody was profoundly deferential, but nobody was quite sure whether he had come to pave the way for union, or to invite the Athenian government to check it, and when Rangabé, the foreign minister, found him without credentials or instructions, and staved off all discussion, Mr. Gladstone must have felt that though he had seen one of the two or three most wondrous historic sites on the globe, that was all.

Of a jaunt to wilder scenes a letter of Mr. Arthur Gordon's gives a pleasant glimpse : —

You will like an account of an expedition the whole party made yesterday to Albania to pay a visit to an old lady, a great proprietress, who lives in a large ruinous castle at a place called Filates. She is about the greatest personage in these regions, and

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it was thought that the lord high commissioner should pay her a visit if he wished to see Albania. . . . It was a lovely morning, and breakfast was laid on the balcony of the private apartments looking over the garden and commanding the loveliest of views across the strait. Gladstone was in the highest spirits, full of talk and *romping boyishly*. After breakfast the L. H. C.'s barge and the cutters of the *Terrible* conveyed us on board the pretty little gunboat.

We reached Sayada in about two hours, and were received on landing by the governor of the province, who had ridden down from Filates to meet us. We went to the house of the English vice-consul, whilst the long train of horses was preparing to start, but after a few minutes' stay there Gladstone became irrepressibly restless, and insisted on setting off to walk — I of course walked too. The old steward also went with us, and a guard of eight white-kilted palikari on foot. The rest of the party rode, and from a slight hill which we soon reached, it was very pretty to look back at the long procession starting from Sayada and proceeding along the narrow causeway running parallel to our path, the figures silhouetted against the sea. Filates is about 12 miles from Sayada, perhaps more, the path is rugged and mountainous, and commands some fine views. Our palikari guards fired off their long Afghan-looking guns in every direction, greatly to Gladstone's annoyance, but there was no stopping them.

Scouts on the hills gave warning of our approach, and at the entrance to Filates we were met by the whole population. First the Valideh's retainers, then the elders, then the moolahs in their great green turbans, the Christian community, and finally, on the top of the hill, the Valideh's little grandson, gorgeously dressed, and attended by his tutor and a number of black slaves. The little boy salaamed to Gladstone with much grace and self-possession, and then conducted us to the castle, in front of which all the townsfolk who were not engaged in receiving us were congregated in picturesque groups on the smooth grassy lawns and under the great plane trees. The castle is a large ruinous enclosure of walls and towers, with buildings of all sorts and ages within. The Valideh herself, attired in green silk and a fur pelisse, her train held by two negro female slaves, received us at

the head of the stairs and ushered us into a large room with a divan round three sides of it. Sweetmeats and water and pipes and coffee were brought as usual, some of the cups and their filigree stands very handsome. We went out to see the town, preceded by a tall black slave in a gorgeous blue velvet jacket, with a great silver stick in his hand. Under his guidance we visited the khans, the bazaar, and the mosque; not only were we allowed to enter the mosque with our shoes on, but on Gladstone expressing a wish to hear the call to prayer, the muezzin was sent up to the top of the minaret to call the azan two hours before the proper time. The sight of the green-turbaned imam crying the azan for a Frank was most singular, and the endless variety of costume displayed by the crowds who thronged the verandahs which surround the mosque was most picturesque. The gateway of the castle too was a picturesque scene. Retainers and guards, slaves and soldiers, and even women, were lounging about, and a beautiful tame little pet roedeer played with the pretty children in bright coloured dresses, clustering under the cavernous archway.

We had dinner in another large room. I counted thirty-two dishes, or I may say courses, for each dish at a Turkish dinner is brought in separately, and it is rude not to eat of all! The most picturesque part of the dinner, and most unusual, was the way the room was lighted. Eight tall, grand Albanians stood like statues behind us, each holding a candle. It reminded me of the torch-bearers who won the laird his bet in the *Legend of Montrose*.

After dinner there was a long and somewhat tedious interval of smoking and story-telling in the dark, and we called upon Lacaita to recite Italian poetry, which he did with much effect, pouring out sonnet after sonnet of Petrarch, including that which my father thinks the most beautiful in the Italian language, that which has in it the 'Campeggiar del angelico riso.' This showed me how easy it was to fall into the habits of a country. Gladstone is as unoriental as any man well can be, yet his calling on Lacaita to recite was really just the same thing that every Pasha does after dinner, when he orders his tale-teller to repeat a story. The ladies meanwhile were packed off to the harem for the night, Lady Bowen acting as their interpreter. My L. H. C., his two secretaries, his three aide-de-camps, Captains Blomfield and

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Clanricarde, and the vice-consul, all slept in the same room, and that not a large one, and we were packed tight on the floor, under quilts of Brusa silk and gold, tucked up round us by gorgeous Albanians. Gladstone amused himself with speculating whether or no we were in contravention of the provisions of Lord Shaftesbury's lodging-house act!

After a month of cloudless sunshine it took it into its head to rain this night of all nights in the year, and rain as it only does in these regions. Gladstone and I walked down again despite of wind, rain, and mud, and our palikari guard—to keep up their spirits, I suppose—chanted wild choruses all the way. We nearly got stuck altogether in the muddy flat near Sayada, and got on board the *Osprey* wet through, my hands so chilled I could hardly steer the boat. Of course we had far outwalked the riding party, so we had to wait. What a breakfast we ate! that is those of us who could eat, for the passage was rough and Gladstone and the ladies flat on their backs and very sorry for themselves.

Mr. Gladstone's comment in his diary is brief: 'The whole impression is saddening; it is all indolence, decay, stagnation; the image of God seems as if it were nowhere. But there is much of wild and picturesque.' The English in the island, both civil and military, adopted the tone of unfriendly journals in London, and the garrison went so far as not even to invite Mr. Gladstone to mess, a compliment never omitted before. The Ionians, on the other hand, like people in most other badly governed countries did not show in the noblest colours. There were petitions, letters, memorials, as to which Mr. Gladstone mildly notes that he has to 'lament a spirit of exaggeration and obvious errors of fact.' There was a stream of demands from hosts of Spiridiones, Christodulos, Euphrosunes, for government employ, and the memorial survives, attested by bishop and clergy, of a man with a daughter to marry, who being too poor to find a dowry 'had decided on reverting to your Excellency's well-known philhellenism, and with tears in his eyes besought that your Excellency,' et cetera.

One incident was much disliked at home, as having the fearsome flavour of the Puseyite. It had been customary at levees for the lord high commissioner to bow to everybody, but also to shake hands with the bishops and sundry other high persons. Mr. Gladstone stooped and actually kissed the bishop's hand. Sir Edward Lytton inquired if the story were true, as a question might be asked in parliament. It is true, said Mr. Gladstone (February 7), but 'I hope Sir E. L. will not in his consideration for me entangle himself in such a matter, but as he knows nothing now, will continue to know nothing, and will say that the subject did not enter into his instructions, and that he presumes I shall be at home in two or three more weeks to answer for all my misdeeds.'[1]

The secretary of state and his potent emissary — the radical who had turned tory and the tory who was on the verge of formally turning liberal — got on excellently together. Though he was not exact in business, the minister's despatches and letters show shrewdness, good sense, and right feeling, with a copious garnish of flummery. Demagogy, he says to Mr. Gladstone, will continue to be a trade and the most fascinating of all trades, because animated by personal vanity, and its venality disguised even to the demagogue himself by the love of country, by which it may be really accompanied. The Ionian constitution should certainly be mended, for 'my convictions tell me that there is nothing so impracticable as the Unreal.' He comforts his commissioner by the reminder that a population after all has one great human heart, and a great human heart is that which chiefly exalts the Man of Genius over the mere Man of Talent, so that when a Man of Genius with practical experience of the principles of sound government comes face to face with a people whose interest it is to be governed well, the chances are that they will understand each other.

[1] This and his alleged attendance at mass, and compliance with sundry other rites, were often heard of in later times, and even so late as 1879 Mr. Gladstone was subjected to some rude baiting from doctors of divinity and others.

IV

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Mr. Gladstone applied himself with the utmost gravity to the affairs of a pygmy state with a total population under 250,000. His imagination did its work. While you seem, he said most truly, to be dealing only with a few specks scarcely visible on the map of Europe, you are engaged in solving a problem as delicate and difficult as if it arose on a far more conspicuous stage. The people he found to be eminently gifted by nature with that subtlety which is apt to degenerate into sophistry, and prone to be both rather light-minded and extremely suspicious. The permanent officials in Downing Street, with less polite analysis, had been accustomed to regard the islanders more bluntly as a 'pack of scamps.' This was what had done the mischief. The material condition of the cultivators was in some respects not bad, but Mr. Gladstone laid down a profound and solid principle when he said that 'no method of dealing with a civilised community can be satisfactory which does not make provision for its political action as well as its social state.'[1] The idea of political reform had for a time made head against the idea of union with the Greek kingdom, but for some years past the whole stream of popular tendency and feeling set strongly towards union, and disdained contentment with anything else. Mankind turn naturally to the solutions that seem the simplest. Mr. Gladstone condemned the existing system as bad for us and bad for them. Circumstances made it impossible for him to suggest amendment by throwing the burden bodily off our shoulders, and at that time he undoubtedly regarded union with Greece as in itself undesirable for the Ionians. Circumstances and his own love of freedom made it equally impossible to recommend the violent suppression of the constitution. The only course

[1] Finlay, *History of Greece*, vii. p. 306, blames both Bulwer and Mr. Gladstone because they 'directed their attention to the means of applying sound theories of government to a state of things where a change in the social relations of the inhabitants and modifications in the tenure and rights of property were the real evils that required remedy, and over these the British government could exercise very little influence if opposed by the Ionian representatives.' But is not this to say that the real remedy was unattainable without political reform?

left open was to turn the mockery of free government into a reality, and this operation he proposed to carry out with a bold hand. The details of this enlargement of popular rights and privileges, and the accompanying financial purgation, do not now concern us. Whether the case either demanded or permitted originality in the way of construction I need not discuss. The manufacture of a constitution is always the easiest thing in the world. The question is whether the people concerned will work it, and in spite of that buoyant optimism which never in any circumstances deserted him in respect of whatever business he might have in hand, Mr. Gladstone must have doubted whether his islanders would ever pretend to accept what they did not seek, as a substitute for what they did seek but were not allowed to have. Before anybody knew the scope of his plan, the six newspapers flew to arms with a vivacity that, whether it was Italian or was Greek, was in either case a fatal sign of the public temper. What, they cried, did the treaty of 1815 mean by describing the Ionian state as free and independent? What was a protectorate, and what the rights of the protector? Was there no difference between a protector and a sovereign? What could be more arrogant and absurd than that the protector, who was not sovereign, should talk about 'conceding' reforms to a free and independent state? All these questions were in themselves not very easy to answer, but what was a more serious obstacle than the argumentative puzzles of partisans was a want of moral and political courage; was the sycophancy of one class, and the greediness of others.[1]

Closely connected with the recommendations of constitutional reform was the question by whom the necessary communications with the assembly were to be conducted. Sir John Young was obviously impossible, though he was not at once brought to face the fact. Mr. Gladstone upon this made to the colonial secretary (December 27) an offer that

[1] May 7, 1861. *Hans.* 3rd Ser. 162, p. 1687. The salaries of the deputies struck him as especially excessive, and on the same occasion he let fall the *obiter dictum*; 'For my part I trust that of all the changes that may in the course of generations be made in the constitution of this country, the very last and latest will be the payment of members of this House.'

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if he had already determined on Young's recall, and if he thought reform would stand a better chance if introduced by Mr. Gladstone himself, he was willing to serve as lord high commissioner for the very limited time that might be necessary. We may be sure that the government lost not an hour in making up their minds on a plan that went still further both in the way of bringing Mr. Gladstone into still closer connection with them, and towards relieving themselves of a responsibility which they never from the first had any business to devolve upon Mr. Gladstone or anybody else. The answer came by telegraph (January 11), 'The Queen accepts. Your commission is being made out.'

All other embarrassments were now infinitely aggravated by the sudden discovery from the lawyers that acceptance of the new office not only vacated the seat in parliament, but also rendered Mr. Gladstone incapable of election until he had ceased to hold the office. 'This, I must confess,' he told Sir Edward, 'is a great blow. The difficulty and the detriment are serious' (January 17). If some enemy on the meeting of the House in February should choose to move the writ for the vacant seat at Oxford, the election would necessarily take place at a date too early for the completion of the business at Corfu, and Mr. Gladstone still at work as high commissioner would still therefore be ineligible. Nobody was ever by constitution more averse than Mr. Gladstone to turning backward, and in this case he felt himself especially bound to go forward not only by the logic of the Ionian situation at the moment, but for the reason which was also characteristic of him, that the Queen in approving his appointment (January 7) had described his conduct as both patriotic and most opportune, and therefore he thought there would be unspeakable shabbiness in turning round upon her by a hurried withdrawal. The Oxford entanglement thus became almost desperate. Resolved not to disturb the settled order of proceeding with his assembly, Mr. Gladstone with a thoroughly characteristic union of ingenuity and tenacity tried various ways of extrication. To complete the mortifications of the position, the telegraph broke down.

The scrape was nearly as harassing to his friends at

home as to himself. Politicians above all men can never safely count on the charity that thinketh no evil. Lord John Russell told Lord Aberdeen that it was clear that Gladstone was staying away to avoid a discussion on the coming Reform bill. There was a violent attack upon him in the *Times* (January 13) as having supplanted Young. The writers of leading articles looked up Greek history from the days of the visit of Ulysses to Alcinous downwards, and they mocked his respect for the countrymen of Miltiades, and his reverence for the church of Chrysostom and Athanasius. The satirists of the cleverest journal of the day admitted his greatness, the brilliance and originality of his finance, the incomparable splendour of his eloquence, and a courage equal to any undertaking, that quailed before no opposition and suffered no abatement in defeat, and they only marvelled the more that a statesman of the first rank should accept at the hands of an insidious rival a fifth-rate mission — insidious rival not named but easy to identify. The fact that Mr. Gladstone had hired a house at Corfu was the foundation of a transcendent story that Mr. Disraeli wished to make him the king of the Ionian islands. 'I hardly think it needful to assure you,' Mr. Gladstone told Lytton, 'that I have never attached the smallest weight to any of the insinuations which it seems people have thought worth while to launch at some member or members of your government with respect to my mission.' Though Mr. Gladstone was never by any means unconscious of the hum and buzz of paltriness and malice that often surrounds conspicuous public men, nobody was ever more regally indifferent. Graham predicted that though Gladstone would always be the first man in the House of Commons, he would not again be what he was before the Ionian business. They all thought that he would be attacked on his return. '*Ah*,' said Aberdeen, '*but he is terrible in the rebound*.'

After much perplexity and running to and fro in London, it was arranged between the secretary of state and Mr. Gladstone's friends, including Phillimore principally, and then Northcote and M. Bernard, that a course of proceeding should be followed, which Mr. Gladstone when he knew it

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thought unfortunate. A new commission naming a successor was issued, and Mr. Gladstone then became *ipso facto* liberated. Sir Henry Storks was the officer chosen, and as soon as his commission was formally received by him, he was to execute a warrant under which he deputed all powers to Mr. Gladstone until his arrival. Whether Mr. Gladstone was lord high commissioner when he came to propose his reform is a moot point. So intricate was the puzzle that the under-secretary addressed a letter to Mr. Gladstone by his name and not by the style of his official dignity, because he could not be at all sure what that official dignity really was. What is certain is that Mr. Gladstone, though it was never his way to quarrel with other people's action taken in good faith on his behalf, did not perceive the necessity for proceeding so rapidly to the appointment of his successor, and thought it decidedly injurious to such chances as his reforms might have possessed.[1]

The assembly that had been convoked by Sir John Young for an extraordinary session (January 25), at once showed that its labours would bear no fruit. Mr. Gladstone as lord high commissioner opened the session with a message that they had met to consider proposals for reform which he desired to lay before them as soon as possible. The game began with the passing of a resolution that it was the single and unanimous *will* (*θέλησις*) of the Ionian people that the seven islands should be united to Greece. Mr. Gladstone fought like a lion for scholar's authority to treat the word as only meaning wish or disposition, and he took for touchstone the question whether men could speak of the *θέλησις* of the Almighty; the word in the Lord's Prayer was found to be *θέλημα*. As Finlay truly says, it would have been much more to the point to accept the word as it was meant by those who used it. As to that no mistake was possible. Some say that he ought plainly to have told them they had violated the

[1] On Feb. 7, the secretary of the treasury moved the writ, and the next day the vice-chancellor notified that there would be an election, Mr. Gladstone having 'vacated his seat by accepting the office of lord high commissioner of the Ionian Islands, which he no longer holds.' He was re-elected (Feb. 12) without opposition.

constitution, to have dissolved them, and above all to have stopped their pay. Instead of this he informed them that they must put their wishes into the shape of a petition to the Queen. The idea was seized with alacrity (January 29). Oligarchs and demagogues were equally pleased to fall in with it, the former because they hoped it would throw their rivals into deeper discredit with their common master, the latter because they knew it would endear them to their constituents.

The Corfiotes received the declaration of the assembly and the address to the Queen with enthusiasm. Great crowds followed the members to their homes with joyous acclamations, all the bells of the town were set ringing, there was a grand illumination for two nights, and the archbishop ordered a *Te Deum*. Neither te-deums nor prayers melted the heart of the British cabinet, aware of the truth impressed at the time on Mr. Gladstone by Lytton, that neither the English public nor the English parliament likes any policy that '*gives anything up*.' The Queen was advised to reply that she could neither consent to abandon the obligations she had undertaken, nor could permit any application from the islands to other Powers in furtherance of any similar design.

Then at last came the grand plan for constitutional reconstruction. Mr. Gladstone after first stating the reply of the Queen, read an eloquent address to the assembly (February 4) in Italian, adjuring them to reject all attempts to evade by any indirect devices the duty of pronouncing a clear and intelligible judgment on the propositions now laid before them. His appeal was useless, and it was received exactly as plans for assimilating Irish administration to English used to be. The nationalists knew that reform would be a difficulty the more in the way of separation, the retrogrades knew it would be a spoke in the wheel of their own jobbery. Mr. Gladstone professed extreme and truly characteristic astonishment in respect of the address to the Queen, that they should regard the permission to ask as identical with the promise to grant, and the right to petition as equivalent to the right to demand.

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If the affair had been less practically vexatious, we can imagine the Socratic satisfaction with which Mr. Gladstone would have revelled in pressing all these and many other distinctions on those who boasted of being Socrates' fellow-countrymen.

From day to day anxiously did Mr. Gladstone watch what he called the dodges of the assembly. Abundant reason as there was to complain of the conduct of the Ionians in all these proceedings, it is well to record the existence of a number of sincere patriots and enlightened men like the two brothers Themistocles, Napoleon Zambelli, and Sir Peter Braila, afterwards Greek minister in London. This small band of royal adherents gave Mr. Gladstone all the help they could in preparing his scheme of reform, and after the scheme was launched, they strained every nerve to induce the assembly to assent to it in spite of the pressure from the people. Their efforts were necessarily unavailing. The great majority, composed as usual of the friends of England who trembled for their own jobs, joining hands with the demagogues, was hostile to the changes proposed, and only flinched from a peremptory vote from doubt as to its reception among the people. Promptitude and force were not to be expected in either way from men in such a frame of mind. 'On a preliminary debate,' Mr. Gladstone wrote mournfully to Phillimore, 'without any motion whatever, one man has spoken for nearly the whole of two days.' Strong language about the proposals as cheating and fraudulent was freely used, but nothing that in Mr. Gladstone's view justified one of those high-handed prorogations after the manner of the Stuarts, that had been the usual expedient in quarrels between the high commissioner and a recalcitrant assembly. These doings had brought English rule over the islands to a level in the opinion of Southern Europe with Austrian rule at Venice and the reign of the cardinals in the pontifical states.

Sir Henry Storks arrived on the 16th of February, and the same day the assembly which before had been working for delay, in a great hurry gave a vote against the proposals, which, though in form preliminary, was in substance decisive;

there were only seven dissentients. Mr. Gladstone sums up the case in a private letter to Sidney Herbert.

*Corfu*, 17*th Feb.* 1859. — This decision is not convenient for me personally, nor for the government at home; but as a whole I cannot regret it so far as England is concerned. I think the proposals give here almost for the first time a perfectly honourable and tenable position in the face of the islands. The first set of manœuvres was directed to preventing them from being made; and that made me really uneasy. The only point of real importance was to get them out. . . . Do not hamper yourself in this affair with me. Let me sink or swim. I have been labouring for truth and justice, and am sufficiently happy in the consciousness of it, to be little distressed either with the prospect of blame, or with the more serious question whether I acted rightly or wrongly in putting myself in the place of L.H.C. to propose these reforms, — a step which has of course been much damaged by the early nomination of Sir H. Storks, done out of mere consideration for me in another point of view. Lytton's conduct throughout has been such that I could have expected no more from the oldest and most confiding friend.

To Lytton himself he writes (Feb. 7, 1859): —

I sincerely wish that I could have repaid your generous confidence and admirable support with recommendations suited to the immediate convenience of your government. But in sending me, you grappled with a difficulty which you might have postponed, and I could not but do the same. Whether it was right that I should come, I do not feel very certain. Yet (stolen despatch and all) I do not regret it. For my feelings are those you have so admirably described; and I really do not know for what it is that political life is worth the living, if it be not for an opportunity of endeavouring to redeem in the face of the world the character of our country wherever, it matters not on how small a scale, that character has been compromised.

Language like this, as sincere as it was lofty, supplies the true test by which to judge Mr. Gladstone's conduct both in the Ionian transaction and many another. From the point of personal and selfish interest any simpleton might see that

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he made a mistake, but measured by his own standard of public virtue, how is he to be blamed, how is he not to be applauded, for undertaking a mission that, but for an unforeseen accident, might have redounded to the honour and the credit of the British power?

V

On February 19 he quitted the scene of so many anxieties and such strenuous effort as we have seen. The *Terrible* fell into a strong north-easter in the Adriatic, and took thirty-six hours to Pola. There they sought shelter and got across with a smooth sea to Venice on the 23rd. He saw the Austrian archduke whom he found kind, intelligent, earnest, pleasing. At Turin a few days later (March 23), he had an interview with Cavour, for whom at that moment the crowning scenes of his great career were just opening. 'At Vicenza,' the diary records (Feb. 28), 'we had cavalry and artillery at the station about to march; more cavalry on the road with a van and pickets, some with drawn swords; at Verona regiments in review; at Milan pickets in the streets; as I write I hear the tread of horse patrolling the streets. Dark omens!' The war with Austria was close at hand.

I may as well in a few sentences finally close the Ionian chapter, though the consummation was not immediate. Mr. Gladstone, while he was for the moment bitten by the notion of ceding the southern islands to Greece, was no more touched by the nationalist aspirations of the Ionians than he had been by nationalism and unification in Italy in 1851. Just as in Italy he clung to constitutional reforms in the particular provinces and states as the key to regeneration, so here he leaned upon the moderates who, while professing strong nationalist feeling, did not believe that the time for its realisation had arrived. A debate was raised in the House of Commons in the spring of 1861, by an Irish member. The Irish catholics twitted Mr. Gladstone with flying the flag of nationality in Italy, and trampling on it in the Ionian islands. He in reply twitted them with crying up nationality for the Greeks, and running it down when it told against the pope. In the Italian case Lord John Russell had (1860) set

up the broad doctrine that a people are the only true judges who should be their rulers — a proposition that was at once seized and much used by the Dandolos, Lombardos, Cavalieratos and the rest at Corfu. Scarcely anybody pretended that England had any separate or selfish interest of her own. 'It is in my view,' said Mr. Gladstone, 'entirely a matter of that kind of interest only, which is in one sense the highest interest of all — namely the interest which is inherent in her character and duty, and her exact and regular fulfilment of obligations which she has contracted with Europe.' [1]

But he held the opinion that it would be nothing less than a crime against the safety of Europe, as connected with the state and course of the Eastern question, if England were at this moment to surrender the protectorate; for if you should surrender the protectorate, what were you to say to Candia, Thessaly, Albania, and other communities of Greek stock still under Turkish rule? Then there was a military question. Large sums of British money had been flung away on fortifications,[2] and people talked of Corfu as they talked in later years about Cyprus, as a needed supplement to the strength of Gibraltar and Malta, and indispensable to our Mediterranean power. People listened agape to demonstrations that the Ionian islands were midway between England and the Persian Gulf; that they were two-thirds of the way to the Red Sea; that they blocked up the mouth of the Adriatic; Constantinople, Smyrna, Alexandria, Naples, formed a belt of great towns around them; they were central to Asia, Europe, and Africa. And so forth in the alarmist's well-worn currency.

Lord Palmerston in 1850 had declared in his highest style that Corfu was a very important position for Mediterranean interests in the event of a war, and it would be great folly to give it up. A year later he repeated that though he should

[1] Mr. Gladstone, May 7, 1861. — *Hans.* Third Ser. 162, p. 1687.

[2] Napier in his *Memoir on the Roads of Cephalonia* (p. 45) tells how Maitland had a notion of building a fort on that island, and on his boat one day asked the commanding engineer how much it would cost. The engineer talked about £100,000. 'Upon this Sir Thomas turned round in the boat, with a long and loud whistle. After this whistle I thought it best to let at least a year pass without again mentioning the subject.'

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not object to the annexation of the southern islands to Greece, Corfu was too important a military and naval post ever to be abandoned by us.[1] As Lord Palmerston changed, so did Mr. Gladstone change. 'Without a good head for Greece, I should not like to see the Ionian protectorate surrendered; with it, I should be well pleased for one to be responsible for giving it up.' Among many other wonderful suggestions was one that he should himself become that 'good head.' 'The first mention,' he wrote to a correspondent in parliament (Jan. 21, 1863), 'of my candidature in Greece some time ago made me laugh very heartily, for though I do love the country and never laughed at anything else in connection with it before, yet the seeing my own name, which in my person was never meant to carry a title of any kind, placed in juxtaposition with that particular idea, made me give way.'

Meanwhile it is safe to conjecture, for the period with which in this chapter we are immediately concerned, that in conceiving and drawing up his Ionian scheme, close contact with liberal doctrines as to free institutions and popular government must have quickened Mr. Gladstone's progress in liberal doctrines in our own affairs at home. In 1863[2] Lord Palmerston himself, in spite of that national aversion to anything like giving up, of which he was himself the most formidable representative, cheerfully handed the Ionians over to their kinsfolk, if kinsfolk they truly were, upon the mainland.[3]

[1] Ashley, ii. pp. 184, 186.

[2] *Dec.* 8, 1862. — Cabinet. Resolution to surrender the Ionian protectorate. Only Lord W[estbury] opposing.

[3] Mr. Gladstone sent home and revised afterwards three elaborate reports on the mischiefs of Ionian government and the constitutional remedies proper for them. They were printed for the use of the cabinet, though whether these fifty large pages, amounting to about a quarter of this volume, received much attention from that body, may without *scandalum magnatum* be doubted, nor do the reports appear to have been laid before parliament. The Italian war was then creating an agitation in Europe upon nationality, as to which the people of the Ionian islands were sensitively alive, and the reports would have supplied a good deal of fuel. There was a separate fourth report upon the suppression of disorder in Cephalonia in 1848, which everybody afterwards agreed that it was not expedient to publish. It still exists in the archives of the colonial office.

# CHAPTER XI

## JUNCTION WITH THE LIBERALS

(*1859*)

> Conviction, in spite of early associations and long-cherished prepossessions — strong conviction, and an overpowering sense of the public interests operating for many, many years before full effect was given to it, placed me in the ranks of the liberal party. — Gladstone (Ormskirk, 1867).



When Mr. Gladstone returned to England in March 1859, he found the conservatives with much ineffectual industry, some misplaced ingenuity, and many misgivings and divisions, trying their hands at parliamentary reform. Their infringement of what passed for a liberal patent was not turning out well. Convulsions in the cabinet, murmurs in the lobbies, resistance from the opposite benches, all showed that a ministry existing on sufferance would not at that stage be allowed to settle the question. In this contest Mr. Gladstone did not actively join. Speaking from the ministerial side of the House, he made a fervid defence of nomination boroughs as the nurseries of statesmen, but he voted with ministers against a whig amendment. His desire, he said, was to settle the question as soon as possible, always, however, on the foundation of trust in the people, that 'sound and satisfactory basis on which for several years past legislation had been proceeding.' The hostile amendment was carried against ministers by statesmen irreconcilably at variance with one another, alike in principle and object. The majority of thirty-nine was very large for those days, and it was decisive. Though the parliament was little more than a couple of years old, yet in face of the desperate confusion among leaders, parties, and groups, and

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upon the plea that reform had not been formally submitted as an issue to the country, Lord Derby felt justified in dissolving. Mr. Gladstone held the Oxford seat without opposition. The constituencies displayed an extension of the same essentially conservative feeling that had given Lord Palmerston the victory two years before. Once more the real question lay not so much between measures as men; not so much between democratic change and conservative moderation, as between Palmerston and Russell on the one hand, and Derby and Disraeli on the other. The government at the election improved their position by some thirty votes. This was not enough to outnumber the phalanx of their various opponents combined, but was it possible that the phalanx should combine? Mr. Gladstone, who spoke of the dissolution as being a most improper as well as a most important measure, alike in domestic and in foreign bearings, told Acland that he would not be surprised if the government were to attempt some reconstruction on a broad basis before the new parliament met. This course was not adopted.

The chances of turning out the government were matters of infinite computation among the leaders. The liberal whip after the election gave his own party a majority of fifteen, but the treasury whip, on the other hand, was equally confident of a majority of ten. Still all was admittedly uncertain. The prime perplexity was whether if a new administration could be formed, Lord Palmerston or Lord John should be at its head. Everybody agreed that it would be both impossible and wrong to depose the tories until it was certain that the liberals were united enough to mount into their seat, and no government could last unless it comprehended both the old prime ministers. Could not one of them carry the prize of the premiership into the Lords, and leave to the other the consolation stake of leadership in the Commons? Lord Palmerston, who took the crisis with a veteran's good-humoured coolness, told his intimates that he at any rate would not go up to the Lords, for he could not trust John Russell in the other House. With a view, however, to ministerial efficiency, he was anxious to keep Russell in the Commons, as with him and

Gladstone they would make a strong treasury bench. But was it certain that Gladstone would join? On this there was endless gossip. One story ran that Mrs. Gladstone had told somebody that her husband wished bygones to be bygones, was all for a strong government, and was ready to join in forming one. Then the personage to whom this was said upset the inference by declaring there was nothing in the conversation incompatible with a Derby junction. Sir Charles Wood says in his journal: —

*May* 22. — Saw Mrs. Gladstone, who did not seem to contemplate a junction with Palmerston but rather that he should join Derby. I stated the impossibility of that, and that the strongest government possible under present circumstances would be by such a union as took place under Aberdeen. To effect this, all people must pull the same and not different ways as of late years. I said that I blamed her husband for quitting, and ever since he quitted, Palmerston's government in 1855, as well as Lord John; that in the quarrel between Lord John and Gladstone the former had behaved ill, and the latter well.

*May* 27. — Gladstone dined here. . . . He would vote a condemnation of the dissolution, and is afraid of the foreign affairs at so critical a moment being left in the hands of Malmesbury; says that we, the opposition, are not only justified but called upon by the challenge in the Queen's speech on the dissolution, to test the strength of parties; but that he is himself in a different position, that he would vote a condemnation of the dissolution, but hesitates as to no confidence.

Sir Robert Phillimore[1] gives us other glimpses during this month: —

*May* 18. — Long interview with Gladstone. He entered most fully and without any reserve into his views on the state of political parties and on the duties of a statesman at this juncture. Thought the only chance of a strong government was an engrafting of Palmerston upon Lord Derby, dethroning Disraeli from the leadership of the House of Commons, arranging for a moderate Reform bill, placing the foreign office in other hands, but not in

[1] Not, however, Sir Robert until 1862, when he was knighted on becoming Queen's advocate. He was created baronet in 1881.

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Disraeli's. He dwelt much upon this. Foreign politics seemed to have the chief place in his mind.

*May* 31. — Gladstone has seen Palmerston, and said he will not vote against Lord Derby in support of Lord John's supposed motion. The government Gladstone thinks desirable is a fusion of Palmerston and his followers with Lord Derby, which implies, of course, weeding out half at least of the present cabinet. Gladstone will have to vote with government and speak against the cabinet, and violently he will be abused.

*June* 1. — Dined with Gladstone. He is much harassed and distressed at his position relative to the government and opposition. Spoke strongly against Lord Malmesbury. Said if the proposal is to censure the dissolution, he must agree with it, but he will vote against a want of confidence.

One important personage was quite confident that Gladstone would vote the government out. Another thought that he would be sure to join a liberal administration. Palmerston believed this too, even though he might not vote for a motion of want of confidence. Clarendon expected Gladstone to join, though he would rather see him at the foreign office than at the exchequer. At a dinner party at Lord Carlisle's where Palmerston, Lord John, Granville, Clarendon, Lewis, Argyll, and Delane were present, Sir Charles Wood in a conversation with Mrs. Gladstone found her much less inclined to keep the Derby government in. In the last week of May a party feast was planned by Lord Palmerston and the whip, but Lord John Russell declined to join the dinner. It was decided to call a meeting of the party. A confidential visitor was talking of it at Cambridge House, when the brougham came to the door to take Palmerston down to Pembroke Lodge. He was going, he said, to ask Lord John what they should say if they were asked at the meeting whether they had come to an agreement. The interview was not unsatisfactory. Four days later (June 6) a well-attended meeting of the party was held at Willis's Rooms. The two protagonists declared themselves ready to aid in forming a government on a broad basis, and it was understood that either would serve under the other.

It would be for the sovereign to decide. Mr. Bright spoke in what the whigs pronounced to be a highly reasonable vein, and they all broke up in great spirits. The whip pored over his lists, and made out that they could not beat the government by less than seven. This was but a slender margin for a vote of no confidence, but it was felt that mere numbers, though a majority might be an indispensable incident, were in this case not the only test of the conditions required for a solid government. Lord Hartington, the representative of the great house of Cavendish, was put up to move a vote of no confidence.[1]

After three days' debate, ministers were defeated (June 11) by the narrow figure of thirteen in a House of six hundred and thirty-seven. Mr. Gladstone did not speak, but he answered the riddle that had for long so much harassed the wirepullers, by going into the lobby with Disraeli and his flock. The general sense of the majority was probably best expressed by Mr. Bright. Since the fall of the government of Sir Robert Peel, he said, there had been no good handling of the liberal party in the House: the cabinet had been exclusive, the policy had been sometimes wholly wrong, and generally feeble and paltering: if in the new government there should be found men adequately representing these reconciled sections, acting with some measure of boldness and power, grappling with the abuses that were admitted to exist, and relying upon the moral sense and honest feeling of the House, and the general sympathy of the people of England for improvement in our legislation, he was bold to hope that the new government would have a longer tenure of office than any government that had existed for many years past.

The Queen, in the embarrassment of a choice between the two whig veterans, induced Lord Granville, whose cabinet life as yet was only some five years, to try to form a government.

[1] Lord Hartington's motion was — 'That it is essential for the satisfactory result of our deliberations, and for facilitating the discharge of your Majesty's high functions, that your Majesty's government should possess the confidence of this House and of the country; and we deem it our duty respectfully to submit to your Majesty that such confidence is not reposed in the present advisers of your Majesty.'

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This step Palmerston explained by her German sympathies, which made her adverse alike to Lord John and himself. Lord Granville first applied to Palmerston, who said that the Queen ought to have sent for himself first; still he agreed to serve. Lord John would only serve under Granville on condition of being leader in the House of Commons; if he joined — so he argued — and if Palmerston were leader in the Commons, this would make himself third instead of second: on that point his answer was final. So Lord Granville threw up a commission that never had life in it; the Queen handed the task over to Palmerston, and in a few days the new administration was installed. (June 17, 1859.)

II

Mr. Gladstone went back to the office that he had quitted four years and a half before, and undertook the department of finance. The appointment did not pass without considerable remark. 'The real scandal,' he wrote to his Oxford chairman, 'is among the extreme men on the liberal side; they naturally say, "This man has done all he could on behalf of Lord Derby; why is he here to keep out one of us?"' Even some among Mr. Gladstone's private friends wondered how he could bring himself to join a minister of whom he had for three or four years used such unsparing language as had been common on his lips about Lord Palmerston. The plain man was puzzled by a vote in favour of keeping a tory government in, followed by a junction with the men who had thrown that government out. Cobden, as we know, declined to join.[1] 'I am exceedingly sorry,' wrote Mr. Gladstone to his brother Robertson (July 2), 'to find that Cobden does not take office. It was in his person that there seemed to be the best chance of a favourable trial of the experiment of connecting his friends with the practical administration of the government of this country. I am very glad we have Gibson; but Cobden would, especially as an addition to the former, have made a great difference in point of weight.'[2]

[1] *Life of Cobden*, ii. pp. 229–233.

[2] There is a strange story in the *Halifax Papers* of Bright at this time visiting Lord Aberdeen, and displaying much ill humour. 'He cannot reconcile himself to not being con-

Mr. Gladstone, with no special anxiety to defend himself, was clear about his own course. 'Never,' he says, 'had I an easier question to determine than when I was asked to join the government. I can hardly now think how I could have looked any one in the face, had I refused my aid (such as it is) at such a time and under such circumstances.' 'At a moment,' he wrote to the warden of All Souls, 'when war is raging in Europe, when the English government is the only instrument through which there is any hope, humanly speaking, of any safe and early settlement, and when all parties agree that the government of the Queen ought to be strengthened, I have joined the only administration that could be formed, in concert with all the friends (setting aside those whom age excludes) with whom I joined and acted in the government of Lord Aberdeen.'

To the provost of Oriel he addressed a rather elaborate explanation,[1] but it only expands what he says more briefly in a letter (June 16) to Sir William Heathcote, an excellent and honourable man, his colleague in the representation of Oxford: —

I am so little sensible of having had any very doubtful point to consider, that I feel confident that, given the antecedents of the problem as they clearly stood before me, you would have decided in the way that I have done. For thirteen years, the middle space of life, I have been cast out of party connection, severed from my old party, and loath irrecoverably to join a new one. So long have I adhered to the vague hope of a reconstruction, that I have been left alone by every political friend in association with whom I had grown up. My votes too, and such support as I could give, have practically been given to Lord Derby's government, in such a manner as undoubtedly to divest me of all claims whatever on the liberal party and the incoming government. Under these circumstances I am asked to take office. The two leading points which must determine

sidered capable of taking office. Lord John broached a scheme for sending him as governor-general to Canada. I rather doubted the expediency of this, but Mr. Gladstone seemed to think it not a bad scheme' (June 15, 1859). Many curious things sprang up in men's minds at that moment.

[1] Reproduced in Mr. Russell's book on Mr. Gladstone, pp. 144–5.

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immediate action are those of reform and foreign policy. On the first I think that Lord Derby had by dissolution lost all chance of settling it; and, as I desire to see it settled, it seems my duty to assist those who perhaps may settle it. Upon the second I am in real and close harmony of sentiment with the new premier, and the new foreign secretary. How could I, under these circumstances, say, I will have nothing to do with you, and be the one remaining Ishmael in the House of Commons?

Writing to Sir John Acton in 1864, Mr. Gladstone said: —

When I took my present office in 1859, I had several negative and several positive reasons for accepting it. Of the first, there were these. There had been differences and collisions, but there were no resentments. I felt myself to be mischievous in an isolated position, outside the regular party organisation of parliament. And I was aware of no differences of opinion or tendency likely to disturb the new government. Then on the positive side. I felt sure that in finance there was still much useful work to be done. I was desirous to co-operate in settling the question of the franchise, and failed to anticipate the disaster that it was to undergo. My friends were enlisted, or I knew would enlist: Sir James Graham indeed declining office, but taking his position in the party. And the overwhelming interest and weight of the Italian question, and of our foreign policy in connection with it, joined to my entire mistrust of the former government in relation to it, led me to decide without one moment's hesitation. . . .

On the day on which Mr. Gladstone kissed hands (June 18) disturbing news came from Oxford. Not only was his re-election to be opposed, but the enemy had secured the most formidable candidate that he had yet encountered, in the person of Lord Chandos, the eldest son of the Duke of Buckingham. His old chairman became chairman for his new antagonist, and Stafford Northcote, who with Phillimore and Bernard had hitherto fought every election on his behalf, now refused to serve on his committee, while even Sir John Coleridge was alarmed at some reported wavering on the question of a deceased wife's sister.

'Gladstone, angry, harassed, sore,' Phillimore records, 'as well he might be.' The provost of Oriel explains to him that men asked whether his very last vote had not been a vote of confidence in a Derby government, and of want of confidence in a Palmerston government, yet he had joined the government in which he declared by anticipation that he had no confidence. After all, the root of the anger against him was simply that the tories were out and the liberals in, with himself as their strongest confederate. A question was raised whether he ought not to go down and address convocation in person. The dean of Christ Church, however, thought it very doubtful whether he would get a hearing. 'Those,' he told Mr. Gladstone, 'who remember Sir Robert Peel's election testify that there never was a more unreasonable and ferocious mob than convocation was at that time. If you were heard, it is doubtful whether you would gain any votes at that last moment, while it is believed you would lose some. You would be questioned as to the ecclesiastical policy of the cabinet. Either you would not be able to answer fully, or you would answer in such terms as to alienate one or other of the two numerous classes who will now give you many votes.'

The usual waterspout began to pour. The newspapers asserted that Mr. Gladstone meant to cut down naval estimates, and this moved the country clergy to angry apprehension that he was for peace at any price. The candidate was obliged to spend thankless hours on letters to reassure them. 'The two assertions of fact respecting me are wholly unfounded. I mean these two: — 1. That as chancellor of the exchequer I "starved" the Crimean war: that is to say limited the expenditure upon it. There is not a shadow of truth in this statement. 2. That as soon as the war was over I caused the government to reduce their estimates, diminish the army, disband two fleets, and break faith with our seamen. When the war was over, that is in the year 1856, I did not take objection at all to the establishment or expenditure of the year. In the next year, 1857, I considered that they ought to have been further reduced: but neither a man nor a shilling

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was taken from them in consequence of my endeavours.' Other correspondents were uneasy about his soundness on rifle corps and rifle clubs. 'How,' he replied, 'can any uncertainty exist as to the intentions in regard to defence in a government with Lord Palmerston at its head?' He was warned that Cobden, Bright, and Gibson were odious in Oxford, and he was suspected of being their accomplice. The clamour against Puseyism had died down, and the hostility of the evangelicals was no longer keen; otherwise it was the old story. Goldwin Smith tells him, 'Win or lose, you will have the vote of every one of heart and brain in the university and really connected with it. Young Oxford is all with you. Every year more men obtain the reward of their industry through your legislation. But old Oxford takes a long time in dying.' In the end (July 1), he won the battle by a majority of 191 — Gladstone, 1050, Chandos, 859.

My conscience is light and clear,' he wrote to Heathcote in the course of the contest. 'The interests that have weighed with me are in some degree peculiar, and I daresay it is a fault in me, especially as member for Oxford, that I cannot merge the man in the representative. While they have had much reason to complain, I have not had an over-good bargain. In the estimate of mere pleasure and pain, the representation of the university is not worth my having; for though the account is long on both sides, the latter is the heavier, and sharper. In the true estimates of good and evil, I can look back upon the last twelve years with some satisfaction, first, because I feel that as far as I am capable of labouring for anything, I have laboured for Oxford; and secondly, because in this respect at least I have been happy, that the times afforded me in various ways a field. And even as to the contemptible summing up between suffering and enjoyment, my belief is that the latter will endure, while the former will pass away.' The balance struck in this last sentence is a characteristic fragment of Mr. Gladstone's philosophy of public life. It lightened and dispelled the inevitable hours of disappointment and chagrin that, in natures of less lofty fortitude than his, are apt to slacken the nerve and rust the sword.

III



It seems a mistake to treat the acceptance of office under Lord Palmerston as a chief landmark in Mr. Gladstone's protracted journey from tory to liberal. The dilemma between joining Derby and joining Palmerston was no vital choice between two political creeds. The new prime minister and his chancellor of the exchequer had both of them started with Canning for their common master; but there was a generation between them, and Mr. Gladstone had travelled along a road of his own, perhaps not even now perceiving its goal. As we have seen, he told Mr. Walpole in May 1858 (p. 584), that there were 'no broad and palpable differences of opinion on public questions of principle,' that separated himself from the Derbyite tories.[1] Palmerston on the other hand was so much of a Derbyite tory, that his government, which Mr. Gladstone was now entering, owed its long spell of office and power to the countenance of Derby and his men. Mr. Bright had contemplated (p. 579) the possibility of a reverse process — a Derbyite government favoured by Palmerston's men. In either case, the political identity of the two leaders was recognised. To join the new administration, then, marked a party severance but no changed principles. I am far from denying the enormous significance of the party wrench, but it was not a conversion. Mr. Gladstone was at this time in his politics a liberal reformer of Turgot's type, a born lover of good government, of just practical laws, of wise improvement, of public business well handled, of a state that should emancipate and serve the individual. The necessity of summoning new driving force, and amending the machinery of the constitution, had not yet disclosed itself to him. This was soon discovered by events. Meanwhile he may well have thought that he saw as good a chance of great work with Palmerston as with Disraeli; or far better, for the election had shown

[1] It is worth noticing that he sat on the ministerial side of the House without breach of continuity from 1853 to 1866. During the first Derby government, as we have already seen (p. 423), he sat below the gangway on the opposition side; during the Palmerston administration of 1855 he sat below the gangway on the government side; and he remained there after the second Derby accession to office in 1858.

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that Bright was not wrong when he warned him that a Derby government could only exist upon forbearance.

Bright's own words already referred to (p. 625) sufficiently describe Mr. Gladstone's point of view; the need for a ministry with men in it 'acting with some measure of boldness and power, grappling with abuses, and relying upon the moral sense and honest feeling of the House, and the general sympathy of the people of England for improvement.' With such purposes an alliance with liberals of Lord Palmerston's temper implied no wonderful dislodgment. The really great dislodgment in his life had occurred long before. It was the fates that befell his book, it was the Maynooth grant, and the Gorham case, that swept away the foundations on which he had first built. In writing to Manning in 1845 (April 25) after his retirement on the question of Maynooth, Mr. Gladstone says to him, 'Newman sent me a letter giving his own explanation of my position. It was admirably done.' Newman in his letter told him that various persons had asked how he understood Mr. Gladstone's present position, so he put down what he conceived it to be, and he expresses the great interest that he feels in the tone of thought then engaging the statesman's mind: —

I say then [writes Newman, addressing an imaginary interlocutor]: 'Mr. Gladstone has said the state *ought* to have a conscience, but it has not a conscience. Can *he* give it a conscience? Is he to impose his own conscience on the state? He would be very glad to do so, if it thereby would become the state's conscience. But that is absurd. He must deal with facts. It has a thousand consciences, as being in its legislative and executive capacities the aggregate of a hundred minds; that is, it has no conscience.

'You will say, "Well the obvious thing would be, if the state has not a conscience, that he shall cease to be answerable for it." So he has — he has retired from the ministry. While he thought he could believe it had a conscience — till he was forced to give up, what it was his duty to cherish as long as ever he could, the notion that the British empire was a subject and servant of the kingdom of Christ — he served the state. Now that he finds this to be

a mere dream, much as it ought to be otherwise, and as it once was otherwise, he has said, I cannot serve such a mistress.

'But really,' I continue, 'do you in your heart mean to say that he should absolutely and for ever give up the state and country? I hope not. I do not think he has so committed himself. That the conclusion he has come to is a very grave one, and not consistent with his going on blindly in the din and hurry of business, without having principles to guide him, I admit; and this, I conceive, is his reason for at once retiring from the ministry, that he may contemplate the state of things calmly and from without. But I really cannot pronounce, nor can you, nor can he perhaps at once, what is a Christian's duty under these new circumstances, whether to remain in retirement from public affairs or not. Retirement, however, could not be done by halves. If he is absolutely to give up all management of public affairs, he must retire not only from the ministry but from parliament.

'I see another reason for his retiring from the ministry. The public thought they had in his book a pledge that the government would not take such a step with regard to Maynooth as is now before the country. Had he continued in the ministry he would to a certain extent have been misleading the country.

'You say, "He made some show of seeing his way in future, for he gave advice; he said it would be well for all parties to yield something. To see his way and to give advice is as if he had found some principle to go on." I do not so understand him. I thought he distinctly stated he had not yet found a principle. But he gave that advice which facts, or what he called circumstances, made necessary, and which if followed out, will, it is to be hoped, lead to some basis of principle which we do not see at present.'

Compared to the supreme case of conscience indicated here, and it haunted Mr. Gladstone for nearly all his life, the perplexities of party could be but secondary. Those perplexities were never sharper than in the four years from 1854 to 1859; and with his living sense of responsibility for the right use of transcendent powers of national service, it was practically inevitable that he should at last quit the barren position of 'the one remaining Ishmael in the House of Commons.'

IV

BOOK IV. 1859.

Later in this year Mr. Gladstone was chosen to be the first lord rector of the university of Edinburgh under powers conferred by a recent law. His unsuccessful rival was Lord Neaves, excellent as lawyer, humorist, and scholar. In April the following year, in the midst of the most trying session of his life, he went down from the battle-ground at Westminster, and delivered his rectorial address[1] — not particularly pregnant, original, or pithy, but marked by incomparable buoyancy; enforcing a conception of the proper functions of a university that can never be enforced too strongly or too often; and impressing in melodious period and glowing image those ever needed commonplaces about thrift of time and thirst for fame and the glory of knowledge, that kindle sacred fire in young hearts. It was his own career, intellectual as well as political, that gave to his discourse momentum. It was his own example that to youthful hearers gave new depth to a trite lesson, when he exclaimed: 'Believe me when I tell you that the thrift of time will repay you in after life with an usury of profit beyond your most sanguine dreams, and that the waste of it will make you dwindle, alike in intellectual and in moral stature, beneath your darkest reckonings.' So too, we who have it all before us know that it was a maxim of his own inner life, when he told them: 'The thirst for an enduring fame is near akin to the love of true excellence; but the fame of the moment is a dangerous possession and a bastard motive; and he who does his acts in order that the echo of them may come back as a soft music in his ears, plays false to his noble destiny as a Christian man, places himself in continual danger of dallying with wrong, and taints even his virtuous actions at their source.'

[1] The Address is in *Gleanings*, vii.

# APPENDIX

## CHOICE OF PROFESSION

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### *Mr. Gladstone to his Father*

*Cuddesdon, Aug.* 4, 1830. — My beloved Father, — I have a good while refrained from addressing you on a subject of importance and much affecting my own future destiny, from a supposition that your time and thoughts have been much occupied for several months past by other matters of great interest in succession. Now, however, believing you to be more at leisure, I venture to bring it before you. It is, as you will have anticipated, the decision of the profession to which I am to look forward for life. Above eighteen months have now passed since you spoke to me of it at Seaforth, and most kindly desired me, if unable then to make up my mind to go into the law, to take some time to consider calmly of the whole question.

It would have been undutiful to trouble you with a recurrence of it, until such a period had been suffered to elapse, as would suffice to afford, by the effects it should itself produce, some fair criterion and presumption of the inclination which my mind was likely to adopt in reference to the *final* decision. At the same time it would also have been undutiful, and most repugnant to my feelings, to permit the prolongation of that intervening period to such an extent, as to give the shadow of a reason to suppose that anything approaching to reserve had been the cause of my silence. The present time seems to lie between these two extremes, and therefore to render it incumbent on me to apprise you of the state of my own views.

I trust it is hardly necessary to specify my knowledge that when I speak of 'the state of my own views' on this question, I do so not of right but by sufferance, by invitation from you, by that more than parental kindness and indulgence with which I have ever met at my parents' hands, which it would be as absurd to make a matter of *formal* acknowledgment as it would be impossible to repay, and for which I can only say, and I say it from the bottom of my heart, may God reward them with his best and choicest gifts, eternal, unfading in the heavens.

If then I am to advert to the disposition of my own mind as

regards this matter, I cannot avoid perceiving that it has inclined to the ministerial office, for what has now become a considerable period, with a bias at first uncertain and intermittent, but which has regularly and rapidly increased in force and permanence. It has not been owing as far as I can myself discern, to the operation of any external cause whatever; nor of internal ones to any others than those which work their effects in the most gradual and imperceptible manner. Day after day it has grown upon and into my habit of feeling and desire. It has been gradually strengthened by those small accessions of power, each of which singly it would be utterly impossible to trace, but which collectively have not only produced a desire of a certain description, but have led me by reasonings often weighed and sifted and re-sifted to the best of my ability, to the deliberate conclusion which I have stated above. I do not indeed mean to say that there has been *no* time within this period at which I have felt a longing for other pursuits; but such feelings have been unstable and temporary; that which I now speak of is the permanent and habitual inclination of my mind. And such too, I think, it is likely to continue; as far at least as I can venture to think I see anything belonging to the future, or can anticipate the continuance of any one desire, feeling, or principle, in a mind so wayward and uncertain as my own — so far do I believe that this sentiment will remain.

It gives me pain, great pain, to communicate anything which I have even the remotest apprehension can give the slightest annoyance to you. I trust this will not do so; although I fear it may. But though fearing it may, I feel it is my duty to do it: because I have only these three alternatives before me. First, to delay communication to some subsequent opportunity: but as I have no fair prospect of being able *then* to convey a different statement, this plan would be attended with no advantage whatever, as far as I can see. Secondly, to dissemble my feelings: an alternative on which if I said another word I should be behaving undutifully and wickedly towards you. Thirdly, to follow the course I have now chosen, I trust with no feelings but those of the most profound affection, and of unfeigned grief that as far as my own view is concerned, I am unable to make it coincide with yours. I say, *as far* as my own view goes, because I do not now see that my own view can or ought to stand for a moment in the way of your desires. In the hands of my parents, therefore, I am left. But lest you should be led to suppose that I have never reasoned with myself on this matter, but yielded to blind impulses or transitory whims, I will state, not indeed at length, but with as much simplicity and clearness as I am able, some of the motives which seem to me to urge me with an irresistible accumulation of moral force, to this conclusion, and this alone. In the first place, I would say that my own state and character is *not* one of them; nor, I believe, could any views of that character be compatible with their existence and reception, but that in which it now appears to me: namely, as one on which I can look with no degree of satisfaction whatever, and

for the purification of which I can only direct my eyes and offer up my prayers to the throne of God.

First, then, with reference to the *dignity* of this office, I know none to compare with it; none which can compete with the grandeur of its end or of its means — the end, the glory of God, and the means, the restoration of man to that image of his Maker which is now throughout the world so lamentably defaced. True indeed it is, that there are other fields for the use and improvement of all which God lends to us, which are wide, dignified, beneficial, desirable: desirable in the first and highest degree, *if we had not this.* But as long as this field continues, and as long as it continues unfilled, I do not see how I am to persuade myself that any powers, be they the meanest or the greatest, can be *so* profitably or *so* nobly employed as in the performance of this sublime duty. And that this field is *not* yet filled, how can any one doubt who casts his eyes abroad over the moral wilderness of this world, who contemplates the pursuits, desires, designs, and principles of the beings that move so busily in it to and fro, without an object beyond the finding food, be it mental or bodily, for the *present* moment or the *present* life — it matters little which — or beyond ministering to the desires, under whatever modification they may appear, of self-will and self-love? When I look to the standard of habit and principle adopted in the world at large, and then divert my eyes for a moment from that spectacle to the standard fixed and the picture delineated in the book of revelation, then, my beloved father, the conviction flashes on my soul with a moral force I cannot resist, and would not if I could, that the vineyard still wants labourers, that 'the kingdoms of this world are not yet become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ,' and that *till* they are become such, till the frail race of Adam is restored to the knowledge and the likeness of his Maker, till universally and throughout the wide world the will of God is become our delight, and its accomplishment our first and last desire, there can be no claim so solemn and imperative as that which even now seems to call to us with the voice of God from heaven, and to say 'I have given Mine own Son for this rebellious and apostate world, the sacrifice is offered and accepted, but you, you who are basking in the sunbeams of Christianity, you who are blessed beyond measure, and, oh, how beyond desert in parents, in friends, in every circumstance and adjunct that can sweeten your pilgrimage, why will you not bear to fellow-creatures sitting in darkness and the shadow of death the tidings of this universal and incomprehensible love?'

In this, I believe, is included the main reason which influences me; a reason as full of joy as of glory: that transcendent reason, in comparison with which every other object seems to dwindle into utter and absolute insignificance. But I would not conceal from you — why should I? — that which I cannot conceal from myself: that the darker side of this great picture sometimes meets me, and it is vain that, shuddering, I attempt to turn away from it. My mind involuntarily reverts to the sad and solemn conviction that

a fearfully great portion of the world round me is dying in sin. This conviction is the result of that same comparison I have mentioned before, between the principles and practices it embraces, and those which the Almighty authoritatively enjoins: and *entertaining it* as I do, how, my beloved parent, can I bear to think of my own seeking to wanton in the pleasures of life (I mean even its innocent pleasures), or to give up my heart to its business, while my fellow-creatures, to whom I am bound by every tie of human sympathies, of a common sinfulness and a common redemption, day after day are sinking into death? I mean, not the death of the body, which is but a gate either to happiness or to misery, but that of the soul, the true and the only true death. Can I, with this persuasion engrossing me, be justified in inactivity? or in any measure short of the most direct and most effective means of meeting, if in *any degree* it be possible, these horrible calamities? Nor is impotency and incompetency any argument on the other side: if I saw a man drowning I should hold out my hand to help him, although I were uncertain whether my strength would prove sufficient to extricate him or not; how much more strongly, then, is this duty incumbent when there are thousands on thousands perishing in sin and ignorance on every side, and where the stake is not the addition or subtraction of a few short years from a life, which can but be a span, longer or shorter, but the doom, the irrevocable doom of spirits made for God, and once like God, but now alienated and apostate? And the remedy which God has provided for this portentous evil is not like the ponderous and elaborate contrivances of men; its spear is not, like Goliath's, the weaver's beam, but all its weapons are a few pure and simple elements of truth, ill calculated, like the arms of David, in the estimation of the world to attain their object, but yet capable of being wielded by a stripling's hand, and yet more, 'mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strongholds.'

What I have said is from the bottom of my heart, and put forward without the smallest reservation of any kind: and I have said it thus, because in duty bound to do it; and having, too, the comfort of the fullest persuasion that even if your judgment should disallow it, your affection would pardon it. It is possible, indeed, that the (as it seems to me) awful consideration which I have last put forward may have been misstated or misapprehended. Would God it may be so! happy should I be to find either by reason or revelation that the principles of this world were other than I have estimated them to be, and consequently that their fate would be other likewise. I may be under darkness and delusion, having consulted with none in this matter; but till it is shown that I am so, I am bound by all the most solemn ties, ties not created in this world nor to be dissolved with it, but eternal and changeless as our spirits and He who made them, to regulate my actions with reference to these all-important truths — the apostasy of man on the one hand, the love of God on the other. Of my duties *to men* as a social being, can any be so important as to tell them of the

danger under which I believe them to lie, of the precipice to which I fear many are approaching, while thousands have already fallen headlong, and others again, even while I write, are continuing to fall in a succession of appalling rapidity? Of my duties *to God* as a rational and responsible being, especially as a being for whom in common with all men the precious blood of Christ has been given, can any more imperatively and more persuasively demand all the little I can give than this, the proclaiming that one instance of God's unfathomable love which alone so transcends as almost to swallow up all others? while those others thus transcended and eclipsed are such as would be of themselves by far the highest and holiest obligations man could know, did we not know this.

Thus I have endeavoured to state these truths, if truths they are, at least these convictions, to you, dwelling upon them at a length which may perhaps be tedious and appear affected, simply as I trust, in order to represent them to your mind as much to the life as possible, I mean as nearly as possible in the light in which they have again and again appeared, and do habitually appear, to my own, so as to give you the best means in my power of estimating the strength or detecting the weakness of those grounds on which the conclusions above stated rest. (I have not mentioned the benefit I might hope myself to derive from this course of living compared with others; and yet this consideration, though here undoubtedly a secondary one, is, I believe, more weighty than any of those which can be advanced in favour of an opposite determination.)

For some time I doubted whether to state reasons at all: fearing that it might appear presumptuous; but I resolved to do it as choosing rather to incur that risk, than the hazarding an appearance of reserve and desire to conceal my real sentiments from one who has a right to see into the bottom of my heart.

Yet one trespass more I must make on your patience. It may perhaps seem that the inducements I have stated are of an unusual character, unsubstantial, romantic, theoretical, and not practical. Unusual, indeed, they are: because (though it is not without diffidence that I bring this sweeping charge — indeed, I should not dare to bring it were it not brought elsewhere) it is a rare thing in this world even where right actions are performed to ground them upon right motives. At least, I am convinced that there are fundamental errors on this subject very prevalent — that they are in general fixed far too low, and that the height of our standard of practice must ever be adapted more or less to that of principle. God only knows whether this be right. But hence it has been that I have endeavoured, I trust not improperly, to put these motives forward in the simplicity of that form wherein they seem to me to come down from the throne of God to the hearts of men; and to consider my prospects and obligations, not under all the limitations which a highly artificial state of society might seem to impose upon them, but direct and undiluted; not, in short, as one who has certain pursuits to follow, certain objects of his own to gain,

and relations to fulfil, and arrangements to execute — but as a being destined shortly to stand before the judgment seat of God, and there give the decisive account of his actions at the tribunal whose awards admit of no evasion and of no appeal.

That I *have* viewed them in this light I dare not assert; but I have wished and striven to view them so, and to weigh them, and to answer these questions in the same manner as I must answer them on that day when the trumpet of the archangel shall arouse the living and the dead, and when it will be demanded of me in common with all others, how I have kept and how employed that which was committed to my charge. I dare not pretend that I could act even up to the standard here fixed, but I can eye it though distant, with longing hope, and look upwards for the power which I know is all-sufficient, and therefore sufficient to enable even such an one as myself to reach it.

Viewing, then, these considerations in such a light as this, I can come to no other conclusion, at least unaided, than that the work of spreading religion has a claim infinitely transcending all others in dignity, in solemnity, and in usefulness: destined to continue in force until the happy moment come when every human being has been made fully and effectually acquainted with his condition and its remedies — when too, as it seems to me, it will be soon enough — of course, I lay down this rule for myself, provided as I am to the extent of my wants and very far beyond them — to devise other occupations: *now* it behoves me to discharge the overwhelming obligation which summons me to this.

I have scarcely mentioned my beloved mother in the whole of this letter; for though little has ever passed between us on this subject through the medium of language, and nothing whatever, I believe, since I last spoke with you upon it, yet I have long been well aware of the tendency of her desires, long indeed before my own in any degree coincided with them.

I await with deference and interest the communication of your desires upon this subject: earnestly desiring that if I have said anything through pride or self-love, it may be forgiven me at your hands, and by God through his Son; and that if my statements be false, or exaggerated, or romantic, or impracticable, I may, by His mercy and through your instrumentality or that of others, be brought back to my right mind, and taught to hold the truth of God in all its sobriety as well as in all its force. — And believe me ever, my beloved and honoured father, your affectionate and dutiful son,

WM. E. GLADSTONE.

### *John Gladstone to his Son*

*Leamington*, 10 *Aug.* 1830.

MY BELOVED WILLIAM, — I have read and given my best consideration to your letter, dated the 4th, which I only received yesterday. I did hope that you would have delayed making up your mind on a subject so important as your future pursuits in

life must be to yourself and to us all, until you had completed those studies connected with the attainment of the honours or distinctions of which you were so justly ambitious, and on which your mind seemed so bent when we last communicated respecting them. You know my opinion to be, that the field for actual usefulness to our fellow-creatures, where a disposition to exercise it actively exists, is more circumscribed and limited in the occupations and duties of a clergyman, whose sphere of action, unless pluralities are admitted (as I am sure they would not be advocated by you) is necessarily in a great degree confined to his parish, than in those professions or pursuits which lead to a more general knowledge, as well as a more general intercourse with mankind, such as the law, taking it as a basis, and introduction to public life, to which I had looked forward for you, considering you, as I do, peculiarly well qualified to be made thus eminently useful to others, with credit and satisfaction to yourself. There is no doubt but as a clergyman, faithfully and conscientiously discharging the duties of that office to those whose spiritual interests are entrusted to your care, should you eventually be placed in that situation, that you may have both comfort and satisfaction, with few worldly responsibilities, but you will allow me to doubt whether the picture your perhaps too sanguine mind has drawn in your letter before me, would ever be practically realised. Be this as it may, whenever your mind shall be finally made up on this most important subject, I shall trust to its being eventually for your good, whatever that determination may be. In the meantime I am certainly desirous that those studies with which you have been occupied in reading for your degree may be followed up, whether the shorter or longer period may be necessary to prepare you for the results. You are young and have ample time before you. Let nothing be done rashly; be consistent with yourself, and avail yourself of all the advantages placed within your reach. If, when that ordeal is passed, you should continue to think as you now do, I shall not oppose your *then* preparing yourself for the church, but I do hope that your final determination will not until then be taken, and that whatever events may occur in the interval, you will give them such weight and consideration as they may appear to merit. . . . Your mother is much as usual. — With our united and affectionate love, I ever am your affectionate father,

JOHN GLADSTONE.

## CANADA, 1838

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*Jan.* 20/38. — To-day there was a meeting on Canada at Sir R. Peel's. There were present Duke of Wellington, Lords Aberdeen, Ripon, Ellenborough, Stanley, Hardinge, and others. . . . Peel said he did not object to throwing out the government provided it were done by us on our own principles; but that to throw them out on radical principles would be most unwise. He agreed

that less might have been done, but was not willing to take the responsibility of refusing what the government asked. He thought that this rebellion had given a most convenient opportunity for settling the question of the Canadian constitution, which had long been a thorny one and inaccessible; that if we postponed the settlement by giving the assembly another trial, the revolt would be forgotten, and in colder blood the necessary powers might be refused. He thought that when once you went into a measure of a despotic character, it was well to err, if at all, on the side of sufficiency; Lord Ripon strongly concurred. The duke sat with his hand to his ear, turning from one towards another round the circle as they took up the conversation in succession, and said nothing till directly and pressingly called upon by Peel, a simple but striking example of the self-forgetfulness of a great man.

*Jan.* 26/38. — I was myself present at about eight hours [*i.e.* on three occasions] of discussion in Peel's house upon the Canadian question and bill, and there was one meeting held to which I was not summoned. The conservative amendments were all adopted in the thoroughly straightforward view of looking simply at the bill and not at the government and the position of parties. Peel used these emphatic words: 'Depend upon it, our course is the direct one; don't do anything that is wrong for the sake of putting them out; don't avoid anything that is right for the sake of keeping them in.' Every one of these points has now been carried without limitation or exception. For the opposition party this is, in familiar language, a feather in its cap. The whole has been carefully, thoroughly, and effectually done. Nothing since I have been in parliament — not even the defeat of the Church Rate measure last year — has been of a kind to tell so strikingly as regards appearances upon the comparative credit of the two parties.

## SIR ROBERT PEEL'S GOVERNMENT

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*In the great mountain of Mr. Gladstone's papers I have come across an unfinished and undated draft of a letter written by him for the Queen in* 1880 *on Sir Robert Peel's government:* —

Mr. Gladstone with his humble duty reverts to the letter which your Majesty addressed to him a few days back, and in which your Majesty condescended to recollect and to remind him of the day now nearly forty years ago, a day he fears not altogether one of pleasure to your Majesty, when together with others he had the honour to be sworn of your Majesty's privy council. Your Majesty is pleased to pronounce upon the government then installed into office a high eulogy: a eulogy which Mr. Gladstone would presume, as far as he may, to echo. He values it, and values the recollection of the men who principally composed it, because it was, in the first place, a most honourable and high-minded government; because its legislative acts tended greatly,

and almost uniformly, to increase the wellbeing of the country, and to strengthen the attachment of the people to the throne and the laws; while it studied in all things to maintain the reverse of an ambitious or disturbing policy.

It was Mr. Gladstone's good fortune to live on terms of intimacy, and even affection, with the greater portion of its principal and more active members until the close of their valued lives; and although he is far from thinking that they, and he himself with them, committed no serious errors, yet it is his conviction that in many of the most important rules of public policy that government surpassed generally the governments which have succeeded it, whether liberal or conservative. Among them he would mention purity in patronage, financial strictness, loyal adherence to the principle of public economy, jealous regard to the rights of parliament, a single eye to the public interest, strong aversion to extension of territorial responsibilities, and a frank admission of the rights of foreign countries as equal to those of their own. With these recollections of the political character of Sir R. Peel and his government Mr. Gladstone has in no way altered his feelings of regard and respect for them. In all the points he has mentioned he would desire to tread in their steps, and in many of them, or at least in some, he has no hope of soon seeing them equalled. The observance of such principles is in his conviction the best means of disarming radicalism of whatever is dangerous in its composition, and he would feel more completely at ease as to the future prospects of this country could he feel more sure of their being faithfully observed.

Mr. Gladstone is, and has been, but a learner through his life, and he can claim no special gift of insight into the future: the history of his life may not be flattering to his self-love, but he has great consolation in believing that the great legislative acts of the last half-century, in most of which he has had some share . . .

*And here the fragment closes.*

## CRISIS ON THE SUGAR DUTIES, 1844

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In 1841 the whig government raised the question of the sugar duties, and proposed to substitute a protective duty of 12/ per cwt. for the actual or virtual prohibition of foreign sugars which had up to that time subsisted. They were strongly opposed, and decisively beaten. The argument used against them was, I think, twofold. There was the protection plea on behalf of the West Indians whose estates were now worked only by free labour — and there was the great and popular contention that the measure not only admitted sugar the product of slave labour, which we would not allow our own colonies to employ, but that our new supplies would be derived from Brazil, and above all from Cuba and Puerto Rico, where the slave trade was rampant, and was

prosecuted on an enormous scale. The government of Sir R. Peel largely modified our system. Its general professions were the abolition of prohibition, and the reduction of protective duties to a moderate rate. In 1844 it was determined to deal with the sugar duties, and to admit sugar at, I think, a rate of 10/ per cwt. beyond the rate for British-grown. But we had to bear in mind the arguments of 1841, and it was determined that the sugars so to be admitted were to be the product of free labour only. There was some uncertainty from whence they were to come. Java produced sugar largely, under a system involving certain restraints, but as we contended essentially free. The whole argument, however, was difficult and perplexed, and a parliamentary combination was formed against the government. The opposition, with perfect consistency, mustered in full force. The West Indian interest, which, though much reduced in wealth, still subsisted as a parliamentary entity, was keenly arrayed on the same side. There were some votes attracted by dislike, perhaps, to the argument on our side, which appeared to be complex and over-refined. A meeting of the party was held in order to confront the crisis. Sir Robert Peel stated his case in a speech which was thought to be haughty and unconciliatory. I do not recollect whether there was hostile discussion, or whether silence and the sulks prevailed. But I remember that when the meeting of the party broke up, Sir Robert Peel said on quitting the room that it was the worst meeting he had ever attended. It left disagreeable anticipations as to the division which was in immediate prospect. . . . The opposition in general had done what they could to strengthen their momentary association with the West Indian conservatives. Their hopes of a majority depended entirely upon conservative votes. Of course, therefore, it was vital to confine the attack to the merits of the question immediately before the House, as an attack upon the policy of the government generally could only strengthen it by awakening the susceptibilities of party and so reclaiming the stray voters to the administration. Lord Howick, entering into the debate as the hours of enhanced interest began, made a speech which attacked the conservative policy at large, and gave the opening for an effective reply. Lord Stanley perceived his opportunity and turned it to account with great force and adroitness. In a strictly retaliatory speech, he wound up conservative sentiment on behalf of ministers, and restored the tone of the House. The clouds of the earlier evening hours dispersed, and the government was victorious. Two speeches, one negatively and the other positively, reversed the prevailing current, and saved the administration. I have never known a parallel case. The whole honour of the fray, in the ministerial sense, redounded to Lord Stanley. I doubt whether in the twenty-six years of his after life he ever struck such a stroke as this.

## COLONIAL POLICY

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You have reversed, within the last seventy years, every one of these salutary principles. Your policy has been this; you have retained at home the management of and property in colonial lands. You have magnificent sums figuring in your estimates for the ordinary expenses of their governments, instead of allowing them to bear their own expenses. Instead of suffering them to judge what are the measures best adapted to secure their peaceful relations with the aboriginal tribes, and endeavouring to secure their good conduct — instead of telling them that they must not look for help from you unless they maintain the principles of justice, you tell them, 'You must not meddle with the relations between yourselves and the natives; that is a matter for parliament'; a minister sitting in Downing Street must determine how the local relations between the inhabitants of the colony and the aboriginal tribes are to be settled, in every point down to the minutest detail. Nay, even their strictly internal police your soldiery is often called upon to maintain. Then, again, the idea of their electing their own officers is, of course, revolutionary in the extreme — if not invading the royal supremacy, it is something almost as bad, dismembering the empire; and as to making their own laws upon their local affairs without interference or control from us, that is really an innovation so opposed to all ideas of imperial policy, that I think my honourable friend the member for Southwark (Sir William Molesworth) has been the first man in the House bold enough to propose it. Thus, in fact, the principles on which our colonial administration was once conducted have been precisely reversed. Our colonies have come to be looked upon as being, not municipalities endowed with internal freedom, but petty states. If you had only kept to the fundamental idea of your forefathers, that these were municipal bodies founded within the shadow and cincture of your imperial powers — that it was your business to impose on them such positive restraints as you thought necessary, and having done so, to leave them free in everything else — all those principles, instead of being reversed, would have survived in full vigour — you would have saved millions, I was going to say countless millions, to your exchequer; but you would have done something far more important by planting societies more worthy by far of the source from which they spring; for no man can read the history of the great American Revolution without seeing that a hundred years ago your colonies, such as they then were, with the institutions they then possessed, and the political relations in which they then stood to the mother-country, bred and reared men of mental stature and power such as far surpassed anything that colonial life is now commonly considered to be capable of producing. — *Speech on second reading of the New Zealand Constitution bill, May* 21, 1852.

## FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS OF 1853 AS AFFECTING IRELAND

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*When the report of the Irish Financial Relations Commission of* 1894 *was named to him, Mr. Gladstone made the following observations : —*

The changes adopted in that year were explained in my budget speech, and will be found in my volume of *Financial Statements*, pp. 53, 60, and 69. They affected the Spirit Duties and the Income-Tax.

1. *The Spirit Duties.* — We laid 8d. per gallon upon Irish spirits, imposed at the same time 1s. per gallon in Scotland, and laid it down that the equalisation of the duty in the three countries would require a reduction of the duty of 8s. chargeable in England. Sir Robert Peel had imposed 1s. per gallon on Irish spirits in 1842, but was defeated by the smuggler, and repealed the duty in consequence of the failure. In 1842 the duty was levied by a separate revenue police. I abolished this separate police, and handed the duty to the constabulary force, which raised it, and without difficulty.

2. *The Income-Tax* was also in that year extended to Ireland. I pointed out that Sir Robert Peel, in imposing the burden on Great Britain, proposed to give a compensation for it by progressive reductions of duty on consumable commodities, and that Ireland had for twelve years enjoyed her full share of the compensation without undergoing any part of the burden; but I also laid it down as a fundamental principle that the peace income-tax was to be temporary, and I computed that it might cease in 1860. This computation was defeated, first by the Crimean war, second by a change of ideas as to expenditure and establishments which I did everything in my power to check, but which began to creep in with, and after, that war. We were enabled to hold it in check during the government of 1859–66. It has since that time, and especially in these last years, broken all bounds. But although the computation of 1853 was defeated, the principle that the income-tax should be temporary was never forgotten, at least by me, and in the year 1874 I redeemed my pledge by proposing, as mentioned, to repeal it — a course which would have saved the country a sum which it is difficult to reckon, but very large. This fact which was in the public mind in 1853 when the income-tax was temporary, is the key to the whole position. From this point of view we must combine it with the remission of the consolidated annuities. I have not now the means of making the calculation exactly, but it will be found that a descending income-tax on Ireland for seven years at 7d., then 6d., then 5d., is largely, though not completely, balanced by that remission. It will thus be seen that the finance of 1853 is not responsible either for a permanent peace income-tax upon Ireland, or for the present equalisation of the spirit duties. At the same time, I do not mean to condemn those measures. I condemn utterly the extravagance of the civil expenditure in Ireland, which,

if Ireland has been unjustly taxed, cannot for a moment be pleaded as a compensation. I reserve my judgment whether political equality can be made compatible with privilege in point of taxation. I admit, for my own part, that in 1853 I never went back to the union whence the difficulty springs, but only to the union of the exchequers in or about 1817. It is impossible to resist the authority which has now affirmed that we owe a pecuniary, as well as a political debt to Ireland.

## FINANCIAL PROPOSAL OF 1853

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### *Mr. Gladstone to Sir Stafford Northcote*

*Aug.* 6, 1862. — I have three main observations to make upon the conversion scheme, two of which are confessions, and one a maxim for an opposition to remember.

1. In the then doubtful state of foreign politics, had I been capable of fully appreciating it at the time, I ought not to have made the proposal.

2. Such a proposal when made by a government ought either to be resisted outright, or allowed to pass, I do not say without protest, but without delay. For *that* can do nothing but mischief to a proposal depending on public impression. The same course should be taken as is taken in the case of loans.

3. I am sorry to say I made a more serious error, as regards the South Sea Stocks, than the original proposal. In the summer, I think, of 1853, and a good while before harvest the company proposed to me to take Mr. Goulburn's 3 per cents. to an equal amount in lieu of their own. They were at the time more valuable and I refused; but it would have been wise to accept, not because the event proved it so, but because the state of things at the time was so far doubtful as to have made this kind of insurance prudent.

*For the benefit of the expert, I give Mr. Gladstone's further observations on this highly technical matter: —*

I have other remarks to offer. I write, however, from memory. Three millions of the £8,000,000 were paid in exchequer bills. The difference between £100 and the price of consols at the time may, in argument at least, fairly be considered as public loss. You say it was 90 or 91. We could not, however, if the operation had not taken place, have applied our surplus revenue with advantage to the reduction of debt. The balances would have been richer by £5,000,000, but we had to raise seven millions for the services of the year 1854–5. Now, as I am making myself liable for the loss of half a million of money in repaying the South Sea Company, and thereby starving the balances, I am entitled to say on the other hand that the real loss is to be measured by the amount of necessity created for replenishing them, and the charge entailed in effecting it. This I think was done by the exchequer

bonds: and beyond all doubt a large saving was effected to the public by raising money upon those bonds, instead of borrowing in consols at 84 or thereabouts, which I think would have been the price for which we should in that year have borrowed — say, at 84. The redemption price, *i.e.* the price at which on the average consols have been in recent times redeemed, can hardly I think be less than 95, and may be higher. There was in 1854 a strong combination in the City to compel a 'loan' by bearing the funds; and when it was defeated by the vote of the House of Commons, a rapid reaction took place, several millions, as I understand, were lost by the 'bear,' and the attempt was not renewed in 1855, when the loan was, I believe, made on fair terms, relatively to the state of the market.

## THE REFORM BILL OF 1854

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In cabinet on Wednesday Lord John Russell opened the question of the Reform bill, stated the prospect of defeat on Sir E. Dering's motion, and expressed his willingness to postpone the measure until the 27th April. Lord Palmerston recommended postponement altogether. Lord Aberdeen and Graham were averse to any postponement, the latter even declaring his opinion that we ought at the time when the Queen's Speech was framed to have assumed the present state of circumstances as inevitable, and that, therefore, we had no apology or ground for change; further, that we ought if necessary to dissolve upon defeat in order to carry the measure. No one else went this length. All the three I have named were, from their different points of view, disposed to concur in the expedient of postponement, which none of them preferred on its merits. Of the rest of the cabinet, Molesworth and I expressed decidedly our preference for the more decided course of at once giving up the bill for the year, as did the chancellor, and this for the ultimate interest of the plan itself. Lord Lansdowne, Wood, Clarendon, Herbert were all, with more or less decision of phrase, in the same sense. Newcastle, Granville, and Argyll were, I believe, of the same mind. But all were willing to accept the postponement until April 27, rather than the very serious alternative. Molesworth and I both expressed our apprehension that this course would in the end subject the government to far more of censure and of suspicion than if we dealt with the difficulty at once. Next day Lord John came to see me, and told me he had the idea that in April it might probably be found advisable to divide the part of the bill which enfranchises new classes from that which disfranchises places and redistributes seats; with a view of passing the first and letting the latter take its chance; as the popular feeling would tell for the first while the selfish interests were provoked by the last. He thought that withdrawal of the bill was equivalent to defeat, and that either must lead to a summary winding up of

the session. I said the division of the bill was a new idea and a new light to me; but observed that it would by no means help Graham, who felt himself chiefly tied to the disfranchising part; and submitted to him that his view of a withdrawal of the bill, given such circumstances as would alone induce the cabinet to think of it, was more unfavourable than the case warranted — *March* 3, 1854.

## CIVIL SERVICE REFORM

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*Extracts from a letter to Lord John Russell, Jan.* 20, 1854

. . . I do not hesitate to say that one of the great recommendations of the change in my eyes would be its tendency to strengthen and multiply the ties between the higher classes and the possession of administrative power. As a member for Oxford, I look forward eagerly to its operation. There, happily, we are not without some lights of experience to throw upon this part of the subject. The objection which I always hear there from persons who wish to retain restrictions upon elections is this: 'If you leave them to examination, Eton, Harrow, Rugby, and the other public schools will carry *everything*.' I have a strong impression that the aristocracy of this country are even superior in natural gifts, on the average, to the mass: but it is plain that with their acquired advantages, their *insensible education*, irrespective of book-learning, they have an immense superiority. This applies in its degree to all those who may be called gentlemen by birth and training; and it must be remembered that an essential part of any such plan as is now under discussion is the separation of *work*, wherever it can be made, into mechanical and intellectual, a separation which will open to the highly educated class a career, and give them a command over all the higher parts of the civil service, which up to this time they have never enjoyed. . . .

I must admit that the aggregate means now possessed by government for carrying on business in the House of Commons are not in excess of the real need, and will not bear serious diminution. I remember being alarmed as a young man when Lord Althorp said, or was said to have said, that this country could no longer be governed by patronage. But while sitting thirteen years for a borough with a humble constituency, and spending near ten of them in opposition, I was struck by finding that the loss or gain of access to government patronage was not traceable in its effect upon the local political influences. I concluded from this that it was not the intrinsic value of patronage (which is really none, inasmuch as it does not, or ought not, to multiply the aggregate number of places to be given, but only acts on the mode of giving them) that was regarded, but simply that each party liked and claimed to be upon a footing of equality with their neighbours. Just in the same way, it was considered neces-

sary that bandsmen, flagmen, and the rest, should be paid four times the value of their services, without any intention of bribery, but because it was the custom, and was done on the other side — in places where this was thought essential, it has now utterly vanished away, and yet the people vote and work for their cause as zealously as they did before. May not this after all be found to be the case in the House of Commons as well as in many constituencies? . . .

It might increase the uncertainties of the government in the House of Commons on particular nights; but is not the hold even now uncertain as compared with what it was thirty or forty years ago; and is it really weaker for general and for good purposes, on account of that uncertainty, than it then was? I have heard you explain with great force to the House this change in the position of governments since the Reform bill, as a legitimate accompaniment of changes in our political state, by virtue of which we appeal *more* to reason, less to habit, direct interest, or force. May not this be another legitimate and measured step in the same direction? May we not get, I will not say more ease and certainty for the leader of the House, but more real and more honourable strength with the better and, in the long run, the ruling part of the community, by a signal proof of cordial desire that the processes by which government is carried on should not in elections only, but elsewhere too be honourable and pure? I speak with diffidence; but remembering that at the revolution we passed over from prerogative to patronage, and that since the revolution we have also passed from bribery to influence, I cannot think the process is to end here; and after all we have seen of the good sense and good feeling of the community, though it may be too sanguine, I cherish the hope that the day is now near at hand, or actually come, when in pursuit not of visionary notions, but of a great practical and economical improvement, we may safely give yet one more new and striking sign of rational confidence in the intelligence and character of the people.

## MR. GLADSTONE AND THE BANK

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From the time I took office as chancellor of the exchequer I began to learn that the state held in the face of the Bank and the City an essentially false position as to finance. When those relations began, the state was justly in ill odour as a fraudulent bankrupt who was ready on occasion to add force to fraud. After the revolution it adopted better methods though often for unwise purposes, and in order to induce monied men to be lenders it came forward under the countenance of the Bank as its sponsor. Hence a position of subserviency which, as the idea of public faith grew up and gradually attained to solidity, it became the interest of the Bank and the City to prolong. This was done by amicable and accommodating measures towards the government, whose position

was thus cushioned and made easy in order that it might be willing to give it a continued acquiescence. The hinge of the whole situation was this: the government itself was not to be a substantive power in matters of finance, but was to leave the money power supreme and unquestioned. In the conditions of that situation I was reluctant to acquiesce, and I began to fight against it by financial self-assertion from the first, though it was only by the establishment of the Post Office Savings Banks and their great progressive development that the finance minister has been provided with an instrument sufficiently powerful to make him independent of the Bank and the City power when he has occasion for sums in seven figures. I was tenaciously opposed by the governor and deputy-governor of the Bank, who had seats in parliament, and I had the City for an antagonist on almost every occasion. — *Undated fragment.*

## THE DUKE OF NEWCASTLE AND SIDNEY HERBERT

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With reference to the Crimean war, I may give a curious example of the power of self-deception in the most upright men. The offices of colonial secretary and war minister were, in conformity with usage, united in the hands of the Duke of Newcastle. On the outbreak of war it became necessary to separate them. It evidently lay with the holder to choose which he would keep. The duke elected for the war department, and publicly declared that he did this in compliance with the unanimous desire of his colleagues. And no one contradicted him. We could only 'grin and bear it.' I cannot pretend to know the sentiments of each and every minister on the matter. But I myself, and every one with whom I happened to communicate, were very strongly of an opposite opinion. The duke was *well* qualified for the colonial seals, for he was a statesman; *ill* for the war office, as he was no administrator. I believe we all desired that Lord Palmerston should have been war minister. It might have made a difference as to the tolerance of the feeble and incapable administration of our army before Sebastopol. Indeed, I remember hearing Lord Palmerston suggest in cabinet the recall of Sir Richard Airy.

In that crisis one man suffered most unjustly. I mean Sidney Herbert. To some extent, perhaps, his extraordinary and most just popularity led people to refrain from pouring on him those vials of wrath to which his office exposed him in the eyes especially of the uninformed. The duties of his department were really financial. I suppose it to be doubtful whether it was not the duty of the secretary of state's department to deal with the question of supply for the army, leaving to him only the management of the purchasing part. But I conceive it could be subject to no doubt at all that it was the duty of the administrative department of the army on the spot to anticipate and make known their wants for the coming winter. This, if my memory serves me, they wholly

failed to do: and, the Duke of Newcastle's staff being in truth very little competent, Herbert strained himself morning, noon, and night to invent wants for the army, and according to his best judgment or conjecture to supply them. So was laden the great steamer which went to the bottom in the harbour of Balaclava. And so came Herbert to be abused for his good deeds. — *Autobiographic Note*, Sept. 17, 1897.

## THE CRIMEAN WAR

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### *Mr. Gladstone to Duke of Argyll*

*Oct.* 18, '55. — You have conferred a great obligation on me by putting me into the witness-box, and asking me why I thought last year that we were under an obligation to Lord Palmerston for 'concentrating the attention of the cabinet on the expedition to the Crimea.' Such was *then* my feeling, entertained so strongly that I even wrote to him for the purpose of giving to it the most direct expression. And such is my feeling *still*. I think the fall of Sebastopol, viewed in itself and apart from the mode in which it has been brought about, a great benefit to Europe. . . . This benefit I should have contemplated with high and, so to speak, unmixed satisfaction, were I well assured as to the means by which we had achieved it. But, of course, there is a great difference between a war which I felt, however grievous it was, yet to be just and needful, and a war carried on without any adequate justification; so far as I can to this hour tell, without even any well-defined practical object. . . . Your letter (if I must now pass from the defensive) seems to me to involve assumptions as to our right to rectify the distribution of political power by bloodshed, which carry it far beyond just bounds. In the hour of success doctrines and policy are applauded, or pass unquestioned even under misgiving, which are very differently handled at a period of disaster, or when a nation comes to feel the embarrassments it has accumulated. The government are certainly giving effect to the public opinion of the day. If that be a justification, they have it: as all governments of England have had, in all wars, at eighteen months from their commencement. Apart from the commanding consideration of our duty as men and Christians, I am not less an objector to the post-April-policy, on the ground of its certain or probable consequences — in respect first and foremost to Turkey; in respect to the proper place and power of France; in respect to the interest which Europe has in keeping her (and us all) within such place and power; in respect to the permanence of our friendly relations with her; and lastly, in respect to the effects of continued war upon the condition of our own people, and the stability of our institutions. But each of these requires an octavo volume. I must add another head: I view with alarm the future use against England of the arguments and accusations we use against Russia.

*Dec.* 1. — What I find press hardest among the reproaches upon me is this : — 'You went to war for limited objects; why did you not take into account the high probability that those objects would be lost sight of in the excitement which war engenders, and that this war, if once begun, would receive an extension far beyond your views and wishes ?'

*Dec.* 3. — I *do* mean that the reproach I named is the one most nearly just. What the weight due to it is, I forbear finally to judge until I see the conclusion of this tremendous drama. But I quite see enough to be aware that the particular hazard in question ought to have been more sensibly and clearly before me. It *may* be good logic and good sense, I think, to say : — 'I will forego ends that are just, for fear of being driven upon the pursuit of others that are not so.' Whether it *is* so in a particular case depends very much upon the probable amount of the driving power, and of the resisting force which may be at our command.

# CHRONOLOGY[1]

## 1832.

Dec. 13. Elected member for Newark, — Gladstone, 887; Handley, 798; Wilde, 726.

## 1833.

Jan. 25. Admitted a law student at Lincoln's Inn.
March 6. Elected member of Carlton Club.
April 30. Speaks on a Newark petition.
May 17. Appointed on Colchester election committee.
" 21. Presents an Edinburgh petition against immediate abolition of slavery.
June 3. On Slavery Abolition bill.
July 4. On Liverpool election petition.
" 8. Opposes Church Reform (Ireland) bill.
" 25 and 29. On negro apprenticeship system.
Aug. 5. Serves on select committee on stationary office.
" 8. Moves for return on Irish education.

## 1834.

Mar. 12 and 19. On bill disenfranchising Liverpool freemen.
June 4. Serves on select committee on education in England.
July 28. Opposes Universities Admission bill.
Dec. 26. Junior lord of the treasury in Sir R. Peel's ministry.

## 1835.

Jan. 5. Returned unopposed for Newark.
" 27. Under-secretary for war and the colonies.

## 1835.

March 4. Moves for, and serves on, a committee on military expenditure in the colonies.
" 19. Brings in Colonial Passengers' bill for improving condition of emigrants.
" 31. In defence of Irish church.
June 11. Entertained at Newark.
" 22, July 20. Criticises Municipal Corporation bill.
Aug. 21. Defends House of Lords.
Sept. 23. Death of his mother.

## 1836.

Feb. 8. A member of Aborigines committee.
March 22. On negro apprenticeship in Jamaica.
" 28. A member of negro apprenticeship committee.
June 1. On Tithes and Church (Ireland) bill.
" 8. A member of select committee on disposal of land in the colonies.
Oct. 18. Speaks at dinner of Liverpool Tradesmen's Conservative Association.
" 21. Speaks at dinner of Liverpool Operatives' Conservative Association.

## 1837.

Jan. 13. Speaks at Peel banquet at Glasgow.
" 17. Speaks at Newark.
Feb. 10. Moves for return showing religious instruction in the colonies.
March 7. A member of committee on Irish education.
" 8. On affairs of Lower Canada.
" 15. In support of church rates.

[1] All speeches unless otherwise stated were made in the House of Commons.

1837.

April 28. A member of colonial accounts committee.
" 21. At Newark on Poor Law.
" 24. Returned unopposed for Newark.
" 27. Defeated for Manchester,—Thomson, 4127; Philips, 3759; Gladstone, 2324.
Aug. 9. Speaks at dinner at Manchester.
Dec. 12. Member of committee on education of poor children.
" 22. On Canadian discontent.

1838.

Jan. 23. On Canadian affairs.
March 7. Criticises action of government in Canada.
" 30. In defence of West Indian sugar planters.
June 20. On private bill to facilitate colonisation of New Zealand.
July 10. Moves for a commission on grievances of Cape colonists.
" 11 and 23. Opposes the appointment of dissenting chaplains in prisons.
" 27. A member of committee on Scotch education.
" 30. Opposes grant to Maynooth College.
Aug. Visits the continent. Oct. in Sicily; Dec. in Rome.
Dec. *The Church in its Relations with the State*, published.

1839.

Jan. 31. Returns to England.
Apr. 15. Withdraws from Lincoln's Inn.
May 6. Opposes Suspension of the Jamaica constitution.
June 10. Opposes bill for temporary government of Jamaica.
" 20. Criticises the proposal for a board of education.
July 25. Married to Miss Catherine Glynne at Hawarden.

1840.

Mar. 30–April 4. Examiner at Eton for Newcastle scholarship.
April 8. Denounces traffic in opium and Chinese war.
" 8. A member of committee on opium question.

1840.

May 29. In support of Government of Canada bill.
June 3. Eldest son, William Henry, born.
" 15. On Canadian Clergy Reserves bill.
" 25. On sugar duties.
" 29, July 20. Opposes Ecclesiastical Revenues bill.
July 9. A member of select committee on colonisation of New Zealand.
" 27. Denounces traffic in opium.
Sept. 18. Speaks at Liverpool on religious education.
Nov. *Church Principles considered in their Results*, published.

1841.

Jan. 20. On the corn laws at Walsall.
March 31. Proposes rejection of bill admitting Jews to corporate office.
April. Revised edition of *The Church in its Relations with the State*, published.
May 10. Opposes reduction of duty on foreign sugar.
July 29. Re-elected for Newark,—Mr. Gladstone, 633; Lord John Manners, 630; Mr. Hobhouse, 394.
Sept. 3. Appointed vice-president of the board of trade.
" 14. Returned unopposed for Newark.

1842.

Feb. 8. Proposes colonial trade resolutions, and brings in bill for better regulation of railways.
" 14. Replies to Lord J. Russell's condemnation of government's proposals for amending corn law.
" 25. Opposes Mr. Christopher's sliding scale amendment.
March 9. On second reading of corn law importation bill.
April 15. On Colonial Customs Duties bill.
May 13. On preferential duties for colonial goods.
" 23. On importation of live cattle.
June 3. On sugar duties.
" 14. On export duty on coal.
Sept. 18. Loses finger of left hand in gun accident.

1843.

Jan. Anonymous article, 'The Course of Commercial Policy at Home and Abroad,' in *Foreign and Colonial Quarterly Review.*
" 6. Inaugural address at opening of Collegiate Institute, Liverpool.
Feb. 13. Replies to Viscount Howick on the corn law.
April 25. Opposes Mr. Ricardo's motion for immediate free trade.
May 9. Opposes Mr. Villiers's motion for the immediate abolition of corn laws.
" 15. Attends first cabinet as president of the board of trade.
" 19. Supports bill reducing duty on Canadian corn.
June 13. Opposes Lord J. Russell's motion for fixed duty on imported corn.
Aug. 10. Moves second reading of bill legalising exportation of machinery.
Oct. 'Present Aspects of the Church' in *Foreign and Colonial Review.*

1844.

Feb. 5. Moves for select committee on railways.
March 4. On recommendations of committee on railways.
" 7. On slave trade and commercial relations with Brazil.
" 12. Replies to Mr. Cobden's speech on his motion for committee on protective duties.
" 19. On reciprocity in commercial treaties.
" 26. Opposes motion to extend low duty on Canadian corn to colonial wheat.
April. 'On Lord John Russell's Translation of the Francesca da Rimini,' in the *English Review.*
" 2. Outlines provisions of Joint Stock Companies Regulation bill.
" 4. Second son, Stephen Edward, born.
May 18. Presides at Eton anniversary dinner.

1844.

June 3. On sugar duties bill.
" 6. In support of Dissenters' Chapels bill.
" 25. Opposes Mr. Villiers's motion for abolition of corn laws.
July. Review of 'Ellen Middleton,' in *English Review.*
" 8. On second reading of Railways bill.
Aug. 5. Introduces three bills for regulating private bill procedure.
Oct. 'The Theses of Erastus and the Scottish Church Establishment' in the *New Quarterly Review.*
Dec. On Mr. Ward's 'Ideal Church,' in *Quarterly Review.*

1845.

Jan. 28. Retires from cabinet.
Feb. 4. Personal explanation.
" 24. In favour of discriminating duties on sugar.
" 26. Defends distinction between free-labour and slave-labour sugar.
March. *Remarks upon recent Commercial Legislation,* published.
April 11. On second reading of Maynooth College bill.
June. Review of 'Life of Mr. Blanco White,' in *Quarterly.*
" 2. Supports Academical Institutions (Ireland) bill.
July 15. On Spanish treaties and slave-labour sugar.
Sept. 25–Nov. 18. Visits Germany.
Dec. 'Scotch Ecclesiastical Affairs,' in the *Quarterly.*
" 23. Colonial secretary.
Publishes, *A Manual of Prayers from the Liturgy, Arranged for Family Use.*

1846.

Jan. 5. Retires from the representation of Newark.

1847.

June 'From Oxford to Rome' in the *Quarterly.*
" 7. Captain Gladstone defends his brother's action in recalling Sir Eardley Wilmot.

1847.

Aug. 3. Elected for Oxford University, — Sir R. Inglis, 1700; W. E. Gladstone, 997; Mr. Round, 824.
Sept. On Lachmann's 'Ilias' in the *Quarterly*.
Dec. 8. Supports Roman Catholic Relief bill.
" 13. On government of New Zealand.
" 16. In favour of admission of Jews to parliament.

1848.

Feb. 9 and 14. On New Zealand Government bill.
" 16. On Roman Catholic Relief bill.
March 10. On recent commercial changes.
April 3. On repeal of Navigation laws, criticising government's proposal.
" 4. On episcopal revenues.
" 10. Serves as special constable.
" 22. Moves address to the Queen at vestry of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields.
May 16. In favour of increasing usefulness of cathedrals.
" 23. Replies to Lord G. Bentinck on free trade.
June 2. In favour of freedom of navigation.
" 22. Opposes reduction of sugar duties.
Aug. 17. In favour of legalising diplomatic relations with the Vatican.
" 18. On Vancouver's Island, and free colonisation.
Dec. On the Duke of Argyll's *Presbytery Examined* in the *Quarterly*.

1849.

Feb. 19. On revision of parliamentary oaths.
" 22, May 2. In favour of Clergy Relief bill.
March 8. On transportation of convicts.
" 12. On Navigation laws.
" 13. On church rates.
" 27. In favour of scientific colonisation at St. Martin's-in-the-Fields.
April 16. On colonial administration.

1849.

May 10. Defends right of parliament to interfere in colonial affairs.
" 24. In favour of better government of colonies.
June 4. On Australian Colonies bill.
" 14. Protests against compensating Canadian rebels.
" 20. Opposes bill legalising marriage with deceased wife's sister.
" 26. Explains views on colonial questions and policy.
July 5. Moves for inquiry into powers of Hudson Bay Company.
" 13–Aug. 9. Visits Italy: Rome, Naples, Como.
Dec. 'The Clergy Relief Bill' in *Quarterly*.

1850.

Feb. 8. In favour of double chamber constitutions for colonies.
" 21. On causes of agricultural distress, in support of Mr. Disraeli's motion.
March. 'Giacomo Leopardi' in the *Quarterly*.
" 19. On suppression of slave trade.
" 22. On principles of colonial policy.
April 9. Death of his daughter, Catherine Jessy.
May 6. In favour of colonial self-government, and ecclesiastical constitution for church in Australia.
" 13. Moves that Australian Government bill be submitted to colonists.
" 31. In favour of differential sugar duties.
June 4. Letter to Bishop of London: *Remarks on the Royal Supremacy*.
" 27. Attacks Lord Palmerston's foreign policy in Don Pacifico debate.
July 3. On death of Sir R. Peel.
" 8. Criticises Ecclesiastical Commission bill.
" 15. Explains plan for creation of new bishoprics.
" 18. Opposes commission of inquiry into English and Irish universities.

1850.

Aug. 1. 'Last earnest protest' against Australian Colonies Government bill.
Oct. 26. Leaves England for Naples.

1851.

Feb. 26. Returns to England from Naples. Declines Lord Stanley's invitation to join his government.
March 25. Opposes Ecclesiastical Titles Assumption bill.
April 11. On financial plans to relieve agricultural distress.
" 15. Opposes appointment of committee on relations with Kaffir tribes.
May 29. On grievances of inhabitants of Ceylon.
June 30. Opposes Inhabited House Duty bill.
July 4. Protests against Ecclesiastical Titles bill.
" 10. On Rajah Brooke's methods of suppressing piracy.
" 19. On discipline in colonial church.
" Publishes two letters to Lord Aberdeen on Neapolitan misgovernment.
Dec. 7. Death of Sir John Gladstone at Fasque.
" Letter to Dr. Skinner, Bishop of Aberdeen, *On the functions of laymen in the Church.*
Translation of Farini's *The Roman State*, 1815 to 1850, vols. i. and ii. published.

1852.

Jan. 29. Publishes *An Examination of the Official Reply of the Neapolitan Government.*
Feb. 20. Brings in Colonial Bishops bill.
March 15. On free trade.
April. On Farini's 'Stato Romano,' in *Edinburgh Review.*
" 2. Third son, Henry Neville, born.
" 5. Protests against policy of Kaffir war.
" 28. Moves second reading of Colonial Bishops bill.

1852.

April 30. On Mr. Disraeli's budget statement.
May 10. Proposes rejection of bill to assign disenfranchised seats of St. Albans and Sudbury.
" 11. In favour of select committee on education at Maynooth College.
" 12. On paper duty.
" 21. On New Zealand Government bill.
June 8 and 10. Defends action of Bishop of Bath and Wells in the case of Frome vicarage.
" 23. Brings in bill to amend colonial church laws.
July 14. Re-elected for Oxford University, — Sir. R. Inglis, 1368; W. E. Gladstone, 1108; Dr. Marsham, 758.
Nov. 11, 25. In defence of principles of free trade.
" 26. Defends Sir R. Peel's free trade policy.
Dec. 'Count Montalembert on Catholic Interests in the Nineteenth Century' in the *Quarterly.*
" 6. Attacks government's income-tax proposals.
" 16. Replies to Mr. Disraeli's speech in defence of his budget proposals.
" 23. Appointed chancellor of the exchequer.

1853.

Jan. 20. Re-elected for Oxford University, — W. E. Gladstone, 1022; Mr. Perceval, 898.
March 3. Speech on Mr. Hume's motion for repeal of all protective import duties.
" 4 and 18. On Clergy reserves (Canada) bill.
" 28. At Mansion House banquet, on public opinion and public finance.
April 4. On government's proposal to improve education in England and Wales.
" 8. Explains nature of proposals for conversion of portion of national debt.
" 8. On Irish taxation.

1853.

April 14. Opposes motion for repeal of advertisement duty, newspaper stamp tax, and paper duty on financial grounds.
" 18. Introduces his first budget.
" 22. Defends South Sea commutation bill.
May 9. Opposes amendment, in the interest of property, to income-tax.
" 12. Explains changes proposed in succession duties.
" 23. On taxation of Ireland.
June 13. Moves second reading of Savings Bank bill; and July 21.
July 1. Proposes reduction of advertisement duty to sixpence.
" 29. On South Sea Annuities.
Aug. 3. On Colonial Church Regulation bill.
Sept. 27. At Dingwall and Inverness, on results of free trade and evils of war.
Oct. 12. Tribute to memory of Sir R. Peel at unveiling of statue at Manchester. At town hall on Russo-Turkish question.

1854.

Jan. 7. Fourth son, Herbert John, born.
March 6. Introduces budget.
" 17. In support of Oxford University bill.
" 21. Replies to Mr. Disraeli's attack on his financial schemes.
" 25. At Mansion House banquet on war and finance.
April 7. On second reading of Oxford University bill.
" 11. Statement on public expenditure and income.
May 8. Introduces war budget.
" 22. Defends resolution empowering government to issue two millions of exchequer bonds against criticism of Mr. Disraeli.
" 25. On second reading of bill for revision of parliamentary oaths.
" 29. On withdrawal of Bribery Prevention bills.

1854.

June 2. Explains provisions of Revenue and Consolidated Fund Charges bill.
" 21. On proposal to abolish church rates.
" 29. Brings in bill for repeal of usury laws.
Dec. 13. On the Crimean war.
" 2. Moves resolution for regulation of interest on Savings Bank deposits.

1855.

Jan. 29. Opposes Mr. Roebuck's motion.
Feb. 5. Explains reasons for government's resignation.
" 22. Withdraws from cabinet.
" 23. Explains reasons.
March 19. Explains methods adopted to meet war expenditure.
" 19. In favour of free press.
" 26. Defends government of Sardinia in debate on military convention.
April 20. Criticises budget of Sir G. C. Lewis.
" 26. On principles of taxation.
" 30. Criticises government Loan bill.
May 9. Opposes bill for amendment of marriage law.
" 21. Moves adjournment of debate to discuss Vienna conferences.
" 24. On prosecution of the war.
June. 'Sardinia and Rome,' in *Quarterly*.
" 15. On civil service reform.
" 15. Statement as to Aberdeen government, and terms of peace.
July 10. In favour of open admission to civil service.
" 20, 23, and 27. Protests against the system of subsidies, on the guarantee of Turkish loan.
Aug. 3. On Vienna negotiations.
Oct. 12. Lecture on Colonial Policy at Hawarden.
Nov. 12. Lecture on Colonies at Chester.

1856.

Feb. 29. On report of Crimean commissioners.
April 11. Condemns government proposals for national education.

1856.

April 24. On civil service reform.
May 6. On treaty of peace.
" 19. Criticises budget.
July 1. On differences with the United States government on recruiting for the British army.
" 11. Criticises County Courts Amendment bill.
" 23. Strongly opposes the Bishops of London and Durham Retirement bill.
Aug. 'The War and the Peace' in *Gentleman's Magazine*.
Sept. 'The Declining Efficiency of Parliament' in the *Quarterly*.
" 29. At town hall, Mold, in support of Foreign Missionary Society; in the evening at Collegiate Institution, Liverpool, for Society for Propagation of the Gospel.

1857.

Jan. 'Homer and His Successors in Epic Poetry,' and 'Prospects Political and Financial' in *Quarterly*.
" 31. At Stepney, on duty of rich to poor.
Feb. 3. Criticises government's foreign policy and financial measures.
" 5. In support of motion to appoint committee on the Hudson Bay Company. Nominated member of the committee.
" 20. Condemns budget of Sir G. C. Lewis.
March 3. Supports Mr. Cobden's resolution on China.
" 6. Proposes reduction of tea duty, and condemns Sir G. C. Lewis's financial proposals.
" 10. Moves resolution in favour of revising and reducing expenditure.
" 27. Returned unopposed for Oxford University.
April. 'The New Parliament and its Work' in *Quarterly*.
June 2. Speaks at Oxford at inauguration of Diocesan Spiritual Help Society.

1857.

July. 'The Bill for Divorce,' and 'Homeric Characters In and Out of Homer' in *Quarterly*.
" 9. At Glenalmond College on Christian and classical education.
" 16. On the Persian war.
" 17. Denounces war with China.
" 21. On Lord J. Russell's Oaths Validity Act Amendment bill.
" 22, Aug. 4. Criticises and moves amendments to Burials Act Amendment bill.
" 24. Explains strong objections to Divorce and Matrimonial Causes bill.
" 29. Opposes Superannuation Act Amendment bill.
" 31. Opposes second reading of the Divorce bill.
Aug. 7. Protests against unequal treatment of men and women in Divorce bill.
" 12. Supports continuance of tea and sugar duties.
" 14. On Balkan Principalities.
" 14. Personal explanation regarding his connection with Lord Lincoln's divorce.
Oct. 12. At Chester, on duty of England to India.
" 22. At Liverpool, urging closer connection between the great manufacturing towns and the universities.
Dec. 4 and 7. Criticises the Bank Issues Indemnity bill.
" 9. Protests against proposal to increase pension of Sir Henry Havelock.
" 11. On appointment of select committee on Bank Act.

1858.

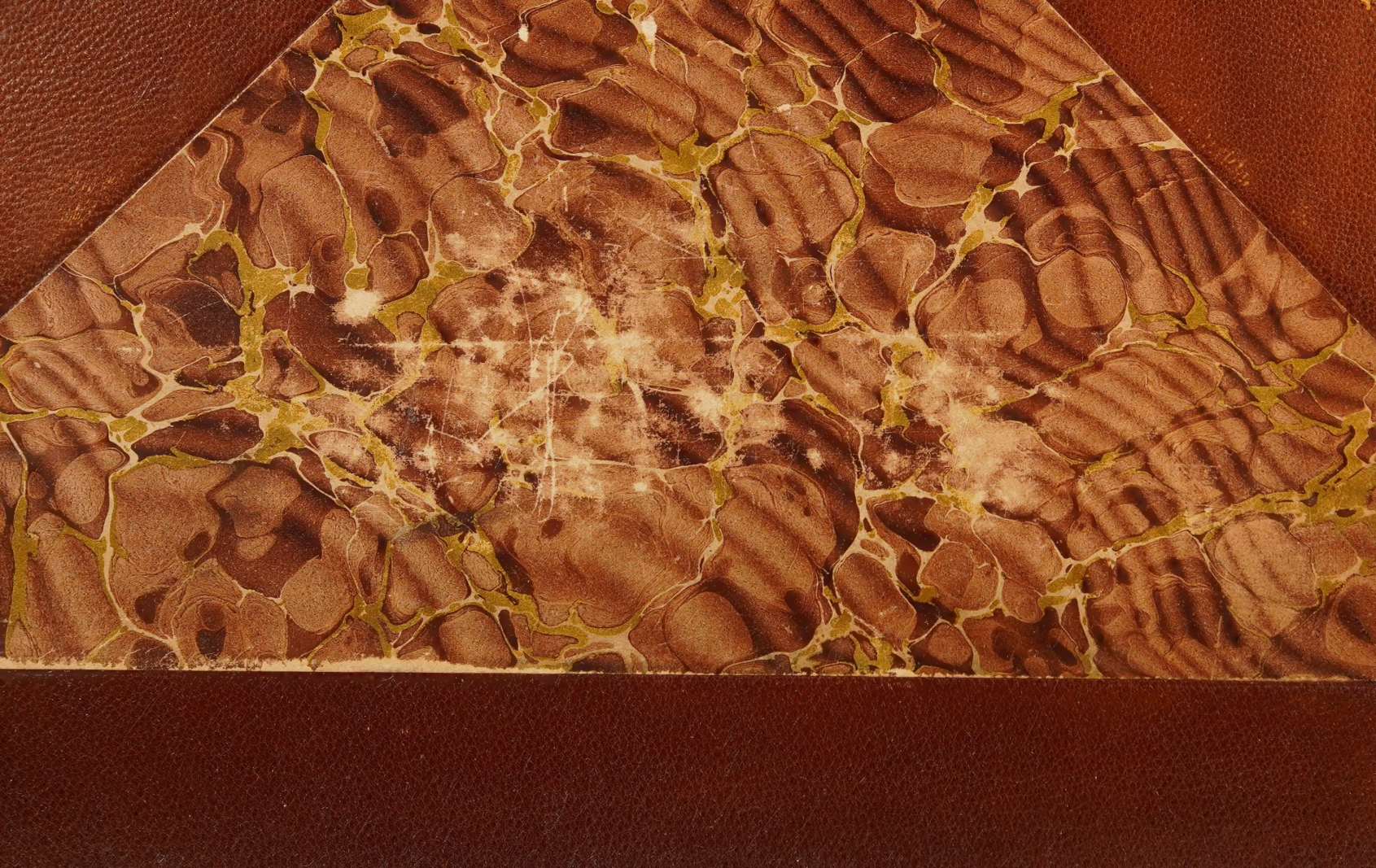
Feb. 19. Opposes Conspiracy to Murder bill.
March. *Studies in Homer and the Homeric Age* published.
April. 'The Fall of the Late Ministry' in *Quarterly*.
" 19. On Mr. Disraeli's budget statement.
21, June 8. Criticises Church Rates Abolition bill.

1858.

April 26 and 30. On proposals for government of India.
May 3. On financial condition of the country.
" 3, June 7, 14, 17, and July 1. On government of India.
" 4. Moves address on Danubian Principalities.
" 21. Defends Lord Canning in debate on the Oude Proclamation.
June 1. On the Suez Canal, condemning English interference with the project.
" 28. Supports Funded Debt bill.
July 1 and 5. Proposes additional clause to Universities (Scotland) bill facilitating the creation of a national university.
" 6. Moves that the army of India be not employed beyond the frontiers of India without permission of parliament.
" 19. On Government of British Columbia bill.
" 20. On Hudson Bay Company.
Oct. 'The Past and Present Administrations' in *Quarterly*.
" 17. Address at Liverpool on university extension.
Nov. 8. Leaves England for Corfu, on appointment as lord high commissioner extraordinary of the Ionian Islands.
Dec. 3. Addresses Ionian Assembly.

1859.

Feb. 5. Presents new constitution to Ionian Chamber of Deputies.

1859.

Feb. 12. Returned unopposed for Oxford University.
March 8. Returns to London.
" 29. On Representation of the People bill.
April. 'The War in Italy' in the *Quarterly*.
" 18. On the state of Italy.
" 29. Returned unopposed for Oxford University.
June 17. Letter to the provost of Oriel.
" 20. Appointed chancellor of the exchequer.
" 22. Presides at annual dinner of Royal Literary Fund.
July 1. Re-elected for Oxford University, — Mr. Gladstone, 1050; Marquis of Chandos, 859.
" 12. Supports bill enabling Roman catholics to hold office of chancellor of Ireland.
" 18. Introduces budget.
" 21. Replies to Mr. Disraeli's criticisms.
Aug. 8. In defence of government's Italian policy.
Oct. On 'Tennyson's Poems' in *Quarterly*.
Nov. 1. At Cambridge, in support of Oxford and Cambridge mission to Central Africa.
" 12. Elected Lord Rector of University of Edinburgh, — Mr. Gladstone, 643; Lord Neaves, 527.
Dec. 'Nelda, a Romance,' translated from Grossi, in *Fraser's Magazine*.